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"A SENSE OF LIBERATION"

MUSSOLINI no longer struts and rants on the European stage. Fascism, in its first home, has been formally brought to an end. The Badoglio Government has taken office—probably for a very short time. We have indeed, what Mr. Churchill well calls, a sense of liberation—especially as we read of the mass demonstrations for peace and democracy in Italy. These popular forces won their chance because of the Allied military success in Africa, in Sicily and in Russia; they reflect the profound desire for peace that has long been apparent in the Italian people, and, more immediately effective, the doubts in the Italian military and civil Command whether the Germans can assure anything for Italy except the certainty of a hopeless but devastating war from one end of the Peninsula to the other. When Hitler and Mussolini met at Verona Hitler demanded a strength of resistance which the Duce could not promise, while the Führer offered a measure of support which was entirely inadequate. At the Fascist Grand Council Grandi moved that the King should take over the command from Mussolini, and Badoglio, an aristocratic and reactionary general, who became notorious as the man who burnt the Abyssinians with mustard gas, became Prime Minister. The situation strikingly resembles that of France in 1940. The appeals to tradition, the declarations that the end of the former government meant not demoralisation, but spiritual regeneration, the contradictory assertions that the Government aims both at peace and the armed defence of Italy—these repeat the story of the formation of the Pétain government, with Badoglio playing the part of Weygand. Mr. Churchill wisely warned us not to make assumptions about the next stage in Italy, but if we read his speech aright, he agrees that the Badoglio government has no choice but either to capitulate or to give way to another government that will accept the demand for unconditional surrender.

We are far from taking the Rome declaration that Fascism is at an end at its face value. The retirement of a dictator, followed by one or two opportune suicides, does not make a democratic summer. Twenty years of Fascism leave a political vacuum. The new Administration consists of officials who have hidden their Party badges in their pockets; the classes who supported the Fascist structure maintain their property and their privileges. But the secret police, still everywhere at work, cannot prevent demonstrations in Northern Italy, or even in Rome itself. Reports about these demonstrations of popular feeling are still somewhat confused. That they express rejoicing at the departure of a dictator who has brought Italy nothing but evil and suffering, is natural; that there are loud cries for peace we have no doubt. In Lombardy something more significant appears to have taken place. All the anti-Fascist groups, recently reported to have formed a single organisation, appear to be working together. Already these demonstrations have taken the form of attacking the offices of Mussolini's favourite paper. There is reason to hope that when the Allies, with or without Badoglio's consent, reach the valley of the Po, they will find an active working-class, anti-Fascist movement. It is significant that, in Sicily, the population has shown itself so universally pleased at the arrival of the army of liberation that A.M.G., the carefully organised and so-called non-political body of civil administration, is proving almost unnecessary. Sicily is, of course, a special case, but there is some reason to hope that the Allies would find the Italian people also ready to receive them.

Allied policy appears not yet completely adjusted to this favourable situation. Those who have urged for many months the preparation of political warfare for this situation seem to be well justified. Even now no adequate effort seems to have been made to bring British, American and Russian policy into harmony. A broadcast from the American Office of War Information spoke in slighting terms, with which most of us would agree, about the King of Italy. Mr. Roosevelt found it necessary immediately to express his regret for these unflattering phrases. Mr. Churchill's outline in the House of Commons on Tuesday endeavoured to keep discussion at a strictly military level. He emphasised the need for the complete surrender of an Italian government; as long as that was forthcoming, it mattered little what government signed the armistice. He threatened as an alternative that Italy would be "seared, scarred and blackened." He made eminently sensible remarks about the undesirability of the sort of occupation by the Allies which would cause reaction against us in Italy. He explained that military operations would be hindered by administrative chaos and social breakdown in the Peninsula. Therefore we must concentrate on the capitulation of the government and on the seizure by the Allies of all the resources and military positions which would be of value in hastening victory against our chief and more serious enemy. What we want is what Germany wanted after the defeat of the French armies: a government which would be able to deliver to us the military goods.

For the moment such a declaration may serve the purpose of hastening the end of armed resistance by the present Italian Government. We shall know soon whether the Germans, who have strengthened the defences of Catania, will be strong enough to bully the Italian Government into a longer show of resistance; that indeed would be an unfortunate result—unfortunate for the Italian populace and also for our armies, which wish as soon as possible to get to grips with Germany itself.

The allies, as Mr. Roosevelt's speech showed, must look beyond the armistice to the difficult task of restoring democracy in a counrry which has suffered for twenty years under Fascism. Mr. Churchill need not fear that when we reach Italy there will be an administrative breakdown which will embarrass us in operations against Germany. The railway workers, always the one strong Italian trade union, would be enthusiastically on our side, and they control the vital lines of communication from the North to the toe of Italy. Again, the workers who strike in Turin and Milan are far more important, and far more likely to favour our cause than the incompetent and corrupt aristocratic official and landlord class which has always supported the Fascist regime. We cannot carry out a social revolution in Italy, but we can encourage those elements which would be genuinely anti-Fascist.

The body of organised anti-Fascists in America and in Britain may not be large enough and may be led by men who have been too long absent from Italy to enable them to form a government of a country from which they have been so long exiled. But to release political prisoners, and to send back into Italy surviving leaders of anti-Fascism like

Sforza, Salvemini, Sturzo, Gentile and many others we could name, would be the beginning of a political education for Italy which has been cut off so long from a knowledge of events in the world outside the Fascist barricade. From a strictly military point of view, which is at the moment the dominant one, plans of this type and even arrangements for bringing relief into Italy may not seem of immediate importance. But events are moving quickly and if, as we suspect, no Italian government that does not make peace can maintain itself in Italy to-day, these political and economic and social questions cannot be evaded. To tackle them in the spirit of democracy, which means a great social as well as political change, is essential if, as Mr. Churchill did well to remind us, the object of our invading force is to maintain as a priceless asset on the side of the Allies the sense that we do indeed come as an army of liberation.

Repercussions

The effects of Mussolini's fall, important in Italy, may in the long run be even more decisive in Europe. The Germans remember that in the last war their allies collapsed and deserted them before their own capacity to resist was exhausted. Will they, then, see in the palace revolution at Rome the beginning of the end? They may not feel quite sure. Badoglio talks of continuing the war, as their loyal ally. Unconvincing as this may seem to us, they may snatch at any crumb of comfort. How far, thanks to foreign broadcasts, do they realise that Fascism has been jettisoned with its inventor? The average German despised his ally so heartily that his first reaction may be to say: "Good riddance." He may not realise what the soldiers will grasp at once, that Italy with its airfields and ports is more useful than the Italian army—to us, if not to him—and that even this despised army did serve to hold the Balkan peoples down. When the German mind begins to work upon all the facts, it may ask itself whether Hitler is as much of a liability as Mussolini. The good news, we may be sure, has already electrified the Balkan Peninsula. There has been more rioting in Sofia, and it would not surprise us if Bulgaria should desert the Axis fairly soon. Among the South Slavs, the Partisans keep up the battle briskly and still pin down considerable forces of the enemy. The pro-Italian party among the Croats must realise already that it backed a lame horse. It could be won back, even now, were it not that the exiled government in London is still dominated by elderly and reactionary Pan-Serbs who still hesitate to concede any equal federal status to the Croats. In Rumania and Hungary popular hatred of Hitlerite Germany is reported to be growing fast. Finally, one of the promptest reactions to Mussolini's fall has occurred in Spain. Franco has had to repress an impatient royalist movement which may have argued that kings are a little better than dictators. Even more astonishing are Franco's wireless talks on the need for "a reconciliation with those who have been misled by Marxism." The "Marxists" may draw a different moral from the events in Rome.

Mr. Maisky

Mr. Maisky had so many warm friends in London that the news of his promotion to the Moscow Foreign Office will be received with mixed feelings. We congratulate him sincerely and we are glad that Mr. Molotov should gain an assistant so tactful, so well-informed and so wise. But we are sorry to lose both him and Madame Maisky, and we find it hard to hope that any successor can fully replace him. He first found his way to our sympathies as an exile in Tsarist days. He had next to endure the rebuffs and discourtesies that were the portion of every official of the Soviets in this country in the early days of the Revolution. Finally, he enjoyed, even among Conservatives, a popularity which he carried with grace, and a sense of humour. Few ambassadors have ever contrived with such perfect tact to stand well with Downing Street and yet to endear themselves to the masses.

Secondary Education—

We said last week that full judgment on the value of Mr. Butler's educational proposals would have to wait on the Report of the Norwood, Fleming and McNair Committees, dealing respectively with secondary school curricula and examinations, with the "public schools," and with the training of teachers. The first of these Reports, that of the Norwood Committee, has now appeared. While it contains much that is good, its range is disappointing; it does not deal, save quite incidentally, either with technical schools or with the new Modern schools to which for some time to come the majority of the new entrants to secondary education will be going. Most of it is essentially a report on grammar schools and grammar school examinations, and not on secondary schools in the wider sense which we shall have in future to give to the term. The point at which it is concerned with secondary education as a whole is, however, of primary importance. When all children pass into a secondary school at 11 *plus*, the existing special place examination obviously disappears, and there has to be a new way of settling who is to go to a grammar, who to a Modern, and who to a junior technical school. The Report proposes that the selection at 11 *plus* should be based on "parents' wishes and school records kept by the child's teachers in the primary schools, supplemented, if desired, by intelligence or other tests." It then proposes a two years' "lower school" course between 11 *plus* and 13 *plus*, with a curriculum common in the main to all types of secondary school, in order to allow, at any rate up to 13 *plus*, for every re-sorting of pupils from one type of school to another. Multilateral schools, widely favoured by educational reformers, are not ruled out; but the Report is cold about them, and seems to regard them as likely to be quite exceptional. Apart from this point, the first general part of the Report seems to be on the right lines. Many will hold that 12 *plus* would be a better age than 11 *plus* for the change from primary to secondary education; but this is hardly practicable until the minimum leaving age goes to 16, as the secondary stage ought to cover at least four years.

—and the Universities

The rest of the Report deals mainly with grammar school examinations and curricula, and with University scholarships and entrance conditions. As was expected, it proposes fairly sweeping changes in these fields. The School Certificate is no longer to depend purely on a single written examination; it is to include data about the candidate's school record. Ultimately, it is to become a purely internal examination, in order to give teachers greater freedom in framing and handling curricula; but this is not to happen for seven years at least, and in the meantime the examination is to be made more elastic, with full freedom in the choice of subjects. The Higher Certificate is to be abolished; but there is to be a secondary school leaving examination to be taken at the age of 18 for strictly limited qualifying purposes, such as University entrance and the requirements of professional bodies. This is to be, not an all-round test, but strictly an examination in particular subjects chosen by each candidate in the light of his special needs. With these changes go large recommendations about University scholarship awards. College and University scholarship examinations are all to take place simultaneously in December, so that there will no longer be a chance of trying several "groups." State scholarships, in increased numbers, are to be awarded in consultation with the L.E.A.'s on the basis of a single annual examination in March; and L.E.A.'s are to have power to make additional awards to candidates who do not get State scholarships. All awards are to be sufficient, subject to a means test, to cover the full costs of University education; and University and College Scholarships are to be made up to a corresponding level by the State. L.E.A. awards are to be available for other places of higher education as well as Universities; but the main stress is laid on the Universities and there is nothing in the Report to suggest that University education itself needs overhauling or expanding to any significant extent. Finally, it is contemplated that there will be for boys and girls alike a period of six months' "national service," not necessarily military, at 18 *plus*—i.e., between school and college, and proposals are put forward for amending grammar school curricula. The most important changes proposed are that elementary science shall be universally taught, that more attention shall be paid to the speaking and writing of good and clear English, and that languages shall play an important part in all secondary schooling. These proposals are good as far as they go; but the entire Report is timidly worded, and loses much of its value because it makes no attempt to deal with the "multilateral" idea or to relate "grammar school" education to other kinds of secondary education.

Colonel Wedgwood

A fighting life has ended peacefully. Colonel Wedgwood will be remembered with two or three others of his generation—notably H. W. Nevinson and Wilfrid Blunt—as an Englishman whose eccentricity only caused him to look and to be all the time typically and triumphantly English. He lived for the joy of battle. He sought it in South Africa and at the Dardanelles as gladly as on the floor of the House of Commons. He lived the paradox which so much of English history illustrates: he fought for the Empire; he hated Imperialism; he proved himself among Kaffirs and Boers a remarkably good imperial administrator. The causes he championed with such ardour, notably the taxation of land values, belonged rather to the last century than to this. The Labour Party never was for him a comfortable spiritual home. He might have been an anarchist, if he had been born in Spain of ancestors who fought Moors, bulls and windmills. But he was born in England and his ancestors made pots.

Questions About Italy (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

The Lobbies have been agog with chatter, some idle and some informed, about the news from Italy. For despite the many prophecies of imminent collapse, the House was taken by surprise at Mussolini's fall. On the Left there is much perturbation at the position of Lord Rennell in Sicily, in view of his past connection with the City and with Italian industrialists. Ivor Thomas, Ben Riley, Shinwell and other Labour M.P.s have pressed both Prime Minister and Eden for the establishment of some democratic Italian administration in the island and have criticised Amgot for closing down on political activities.

The Premier's speech on the new situation in Italy was presaged by a rather acrimonious passage of arms between Eden as leader of the House and members of the Labour Party who wanted a full day's debate on the Government's policy with regard to Sicily and Italy. This could not follow the Prime Minister's speech, which was an undebatable statement. Eden's fencing to try to avoid committing himself to such a debate angered many Labour back-benchers; his argument that the military situation should first be allowed to develop aroused full-throated Tory cheers. As Greenwood from the Front Bench asked for the debate, it will presumably be pressed "through the usual channels."

The Prime Minister's view that the disintegration of Government in Italy might prove embarrassing militarily did not calm the fears which had been roused in the many Labour M.P.s by rumours of a possible deal between the British and American Foreign Offices and the Italian industrialist and official classes who have now deserted Mussolini.

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MOSCOW CALLING

The collapse of one of Europe's dictators has overshadowed a new departure in Russian policy which may hasten the fall of the other. While our Allies were counting their gains around Orel, they devoted a whole page of *Pravda* and many hours of broadcasting time to an appeal for revolution addressed to the Germans. The signatures it bore were not impressive—chiefly prisoners of war and former Communist Members of the Reichstag. But if "Free Germans" signed this skilful piece of propaganda, no one can doubt that it points to Russian policy. Exiles wrote it, but Stalin may have inspired it and must have sanctioned it. It is his policy, though he may hereafter forget it or abandon it. It stands in sharp contrast to the Casablanca policy of unconditional surrender. The war, it argued, is already lost; if Hitler is overthrown solely by the armies of the coalition, this would mean the dismemberment of Germany and the end of her national independence. But if Germans themselves overthrow Hitler and set up a genuine National Government, it would command the confidence of the Allied peoples and could, after withdrawing its troops to its own frontiers, negotiate a peace which would restore Germany to the ranks of the nations "enjoying equal rights."

The weapon of political propaganda commonly has two edges, and this document admits of two interpretations. Stalin may have reckoned that it would be read in London and Washington even before it reached Berlin. We infer that he wished to warn us of the consequences of our one-sided decisions in matters of policy: he, also, can take an independent line. He still says he is sore and suspicious over our long delay in opening a Second Front. He was not consulted over the Casablanca declaration—which may be, in part, his own fault. His consent was not sought for the Churchill-Roosevelt manifesto addressed to Italy. Amgot has been set up without his participation. The position was, indeed, described by Mr. Churchill himself on Tuesday. We "consult" America: we "inform" Russia. Now Stalin may very well think that "unconditional surrender" is a policy that prolongs the war, and he may suspect, with reason, that the Western Governments are hampered in all their propaganda by an excessive dread of revolution. Very well, then, he will make it clear to us that he too can follow a line of his own, He may not manage to start a revolution in Germany, but there will be some response, which will at the least weaken and embarrass German resistance. But if he should succeed, he could not afford to abandon the German revolution. The moral for us is clear: there must be consultation over strategy and policy, and Amgot should be subordinated to a Council of all three Allies.

When in their turn Germans read this appeal, it will open to them the prospect of a negotiated peace based on equal rights, if they can achieve a democratic revolution. This is conceived with great moderation. All the usual civil liberties are to be guaranteed, including security for "legally acquired property." The guilty authors of this war are to be "mercilessly" tried, but Nazis who "recant in time" may count on an "amnesty." There follows an appeal to the workers to organise and revolt. But it is unlikely that the clever authors hoped much from a proletarian rising, nor is their programme addressed chiefly to the have-nots. Its most impressive paragraph is obviously an appeal to soldiers and even to Junkers to act as some of the best and ablest Prussians did in the last phase of the Napoleonic wars. No less a statesman than von Stein withdrew to Russia and from her soil launched a summons to a war of liberation, while Clausewitz commanded Russian armies. The parallel is not exact; but it may start a train of thought among senior ranks of the Offizier Korps. Might they, after all, save Germany and assure her future by returning to the traditional policy of all Prussia's elder statesmen—a Russo-German understanding. The price is not too heavy—the firing squad for Hitler's gang, who are not of their caste, and a moderate Parliamentary regime.

The probability is that for the moment this appeal will fall on stony ground. There are no leaders available of von Stein's calibre, nor can Junkers deal with Bolsheviks as easily as their ancestors dealt with the court of St. Petersburg. There are 500,000 arguments against a revolution—the toughs of Himmler's S.S. force with their revolvers and tanks and their omnipresent spies. But when the omens of defeat grow even plainer than they are to-day, we shall be surprised if the High Command makes no attempt to avert, by political action, the destruction that threatens Germany.

The generals may then divide into two parties. Both will understand that they must first get rid of Hitler. Both must take the risk of accepting a democratic constitution. They have then to choose between the honourable negotiations which this document from Moscow offers, and the policy proclaimed from Casablanca. One group may prefer the Russian terms. It would enter the negotiations with an army behind it, though it must abandon all its conquests. It may recall that while Stalin recently said that "Hitler's army" must be destroyed, "our aim is not to destroy all armed force in Germany, because any intelligent man will understand that this is as impossible in the case of Germany as in the case of Russia." The other group may prefer to surrender to Washington and London, in spite of their refusal to negotiate and the prospect of a prolonged military occupation and total disarmament. They may not be sure that their own family estates come under the Russian definition of "legally acquired property." They may also reckon that if they further the cause of the Western Powers, they and their propertied friends may count on the patronage of the victors. How the debate between two such groups would end, we cannot guess. But the Easterners have an easier brief from which to argue than anything the Westerners could show. When an entire page of the *Times* is devoted to any document as plausible as this, the odds might turn the other way. The generals, however, form a caste apart. Some of them always did incline to an alliance with Russia. But the mass of the German people always was and still is afraid of Russia and hostile to her. We doubt whether Stalin can overcome its fears by a "Free German" manifesto.

If it is difficult to be sure how Germans will receive this document, it is easy to guess what the staff of *Pravda* thought of it, as they subedited and set it. The seniors among them might recall the stirring appeals which Trotsky addressed to the Germans—though few would breathe his name. They might remember the epidemic of strikes that ran by way of response from Berlin to Vienna in January, 1918, and the naval mutiny at Cattaro. Times change, they might reflect, but Germans are still Germans. As they set the rest of the news, would they refrain, in spite of the battle round Catania, from the reflections that have haunted them through two years? In scale the battles they report in parallel columns are not yet comparable, and a third of European Russia has still to be redeemed. But here in this "Free German" appeal is a possible way of shortening the war. So they must have felt as they learnt that they were to give this manifesto their clearest type and their biggest headlines.

COAL WITHOUT CONSCRIPTS

Crouching near a 3-foot seam at the coal face, the manager who was showing me over one of the most up-to-date pits in Northumberland, said breezily to an old miner, "Hullo, Ted, everything all right?" "No," came the unexpected answer. Trickles of sweat, shining in the restless light of the headlamps, ran over the miners' half-naked bodies as they paused and listened. "There's lots of things wrong and you know it." The manager smiled with embarrassment and led me to a different stall in search of more optimistic replies. "That's Ted all over," he said. "Been complaining all his life. The men've got a grievance. It's the chief reason for absenteeism. They think it serves us right for the years when they had to work short time."

Major Lloyd George, Minister of Fuel and Power, has agreed that absenteeism is one of the chief reasons for the declining output of coal—from 230 million tons in 1940 to a current annual rate of about 209 million tons. Men who like their work don't stay away from it without good reason. Absenteeism is a symptom that something is wrong in British coal-mining. But before we consider its origin we might consider why it affects production in the coal industry even more than in any other industry.

If a hundred men engaged in repetition work elsewhere are absent from the "line," the loss of output is measured by what they themselves would have produced in that shift. The work of the factory will go on: the parts which they might have made may be substituted in the final assembly by others drawn from store. In coal-mining, the men who take the day off diminish output not only by what they themselves might have cut or loaded. They dislocate the three-shift system, known as the cycle of production, and lessen the coal won per head of every man on each shift. With slight differences, according to region, the coal is cut in the first shift, "filled" in the second shift, and during the third or "drawing" shift. the conveyor is moved forward into the seam and the rear-timbering is collapsed. Now you can see what happens if the "fillers" the men who break up the coal and load it into conveyors and trucks have an incomplete team. Their coal isn't fully loaded but is left over for the third shift; the men on the third shift can't move the conveyer till the coal is cleared; when the cutters arrive they have to wait till the coal-face has been advanced by the men on the third shift. The next day the "fillers" may be short of work because the cutters could only work a five-hour shift. The production cycle has become a vicious circle.

Prosecution and heavy fines for absenteeism haven't made miners more punctual. When the magistrates are also coal-owners or local bigwigs the miners have become embittered and absenteeism has risen. The Joint Production Committees and Production Officers on whom many hopes were based have also failed to obtain a dramatic spurt in output. On each side of the conference table sits a heritage of mistrust. The men remember too well the strikes of 1921 and 1926 to feel at ease with the managers and agents opposite them. The management, for their part, are jealous for their authority and can't easily rid themselves of the knowledge that from 1918 till 1939 the miners were their absolute dependents, without a voice in the control of industry, to be given work or deprived of it according to the market price of coal.

But cheap buses, radio and education have brought the miner a wider horizon than his native village. The dangerous life in the pit, made harder by periodic starvation and occupational diseases—dermatitis, lupus and tuberculosis—has resolved him not to send his son down the mine, if he can help it. To-day the labour force of approximately 704,000 compared with over a million before the last war reflects that trend. Alone among British craftsmen, the coal-miner hates his work. For him the industry has a

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dismal past and a hopeless future. Unless, therefore, science and government can plan for the reorganisation and advancement of the industry, we are likely in a near future to have a shortage of a commodity essential for the war effort; and in a more distant future to lose our greatest natural asset which in its various forms could restore Britain to a leading place among the world's exporters.

How are we going to meet the approaching crisis when vast troop movements, new fronts and the development of reconquered territory may need another 25 million tons of coal? The Minister, helped by another mild winter and a few thousand rehabilitated miners, hopes to keep the gap between last year's rate of production and consumption closed. But he doesn't seem to have budgeted for new commitments, unusually bad weather, "wastage" through disease and death among the present labour force, the small intake of young miners and his own non-expectation of a return of miners from the forces. Instead of self-congratulation for difficulties luckily survived, we need an immediate and radical programme.

Absenteeism is a product of morale. The miner still feels himself a pawn in the profit game. Only occasionally, as at the time of Dieppe and Stalingrad, does he recognise that his work is an essential part of the war. Then his output rises. I have no doubt that after the Parliamentary debate on Beveridge his output declined. Coal-rationing, with a schedule of priorities for consumers according to their value to the war effort or their physical disabilities, would convince the miners that coal is not being cut for profit alone, but for the nation's use. Rationing is a practical measure of fair distribution and economy; it means good national housekeeping.

In the technique of production there must be more mechanisation. The miner knows that before the war British coal-mining was less than 65 per cent. mechanised against the American 98 per cent. He wants mechanisation to be subject to proper safeguards. Not only for cutting and loading should there be modern equipment, but the whole question of lighting, air-conditioning and transport underground should be scientifically tackled. To-day in many pits, the miner, after leaving the pit-cage, must trudge for over a mile through slime and foul air to the coal face. The road could be as good as the one outside your window; the air could be almost as fresh as in a luxury cinema; and the crossings where so many men are crushed by moving trucks could be made safer by "flyovers" than any Belisha crossing. More science under ground will mean more coal. It demands a high priority for its equipment. It implies, too, that the manager should not be answerable to owners for opening up a new seam or installing new machinery. The manager should be made directly responsible to a Director of Production at the Ministry, through the Regional Controller.

What is required above ground? Because of concentration of pits many miners must now travel much greater distances to their work. It should be the job of the Regional Controller, in liaison with the transport authorities, to ensure that convenient transport is available. It is useless to try to increase production by transferring to another pit men who are tired when they arrive for one shift and too exhausted to report for a second.

Food is a problem. The miner, generally speaking, doesn't like cheese. He doesn't like to eat extra meat in the canteen when his wife and children may be meatless at home. Give the miner a double ration of meat on his ration card. He may want to give it to his family. They, more than likely, will insist that he uses it himself. In either case the miner will be mentally at ease and physically benefited. At present he thinks it unjust that stockbrokers and company directors should have as much meat as himself or his sons, the hoped-for new generation of miners.

With these encouragements the miner may believe that Government good will isn't merely wartime flattery but a portent of a new life for the mining industry. He might then consider it timely for the Government to adopt the Forster Report which recommends a training scheme for youths entering the industry. He doesn't want his son to be mine-fodder, a part of the cheap pony system of hauling coal. He strongly objects to the attempt to force sixteen year old boys into the pits under present conditions arguing, apart from other objections, that conscription for boys should apply, if at all, to all boys, irrespective of class or job.

The immediate need is to bring back mining engineers and miners from the forces. The coal industry is ageing and weary. Let the forces write 25,000 men off as casualties and return them to win a vital battle on the home front.

I believe that the miners, stimulated by faith in the future, would raise their individual output to over 300 tons per annum, if the Government had the boldness to act, instead of praying. There can be a prosperity for coal mining, interlocked with plastics (instead of plastics, as at present, being interlocked with the chemical monopoly) which would end the black days of the Welsh valleys and the Northumberland coast. The miner believes that only national ownership of the mines producing for use and not for private profit, treating him as a first care of the industry and not its prime liability, can end the long misery of the coal fields. That is what the miners used to tell me in the 1920's when, wearing their Sunday suits on a week-day—always a sinister sign of lock-out and strike—they chatted in the village streets of South Wales—South Wales where I was born and spent half my life. It is what the Northumberland miners said to me in 1943. They don't want to start a fight with the owners about nationalisation at the present stage of the war. But they want an earnest of efficiency and goodwill from the Government. They want plans, not pep talks; beef, not bullying. Major Lloyd George has been called the Minister for Fuel without Power. Unless he is prepared to ask for and exercise effective power before the winter his successor and the nation may inherit a painful burden.

MAURICE EDELMAN

HOW MANY HOUSES?

ALMOST incredible as it sounds, there are people in very influential positions who argue that, after all, not very many new houses will be needed when the war is over. Very soon, they say, the population of Great Britain will be falling quite fast; and, on a counting of heads, this should mean that fewer houses will be required. To make good what has been destroyed by bombs is not, when the facts are examined, so great a matter: if the entire building industry could be turned on to the job, all of it could be dealt with in a good deal less than a single year. These same disputants go on to argue that the house-building boom of the 'thirties was abnormal, and that we must expect no repetition of it; and they add that it has resulted in our possessing a great many newly-built houses which can be set against the practical cessation of house-building, except in a few munitions areas, during the war. According to those who argue in this way, the Government's plans for expanding the building industry when the war is over are on much too lavish a scale, and ought to be reduced. In addition, not a few of them add that we shall not be able to afford to build many houses, because house-building uses up capital and we shall need most of our national savings for other, more urgent uses.

Such arguments have appeared publicly, so far, mainly in the financial press. They need to be answered because, behind the scenes, they may seriously affect official policy. The first, the argument based on declining population, can be easily demolished. The need for houses depends primarily not on the total size of the population but on the number of separate families. There is every reason to expect that for some time to come the number of families will increase, and there is certain to be a large increase in it on the morrow of the war. There will be fewer children, but more adults; the typical family will be smaller, but it will need a house. It will doubtless be answered that smaller families can do with smaller houses, which will be cheaper to build. But the cost of houses does not fall in proportion to a reduction in their size: there are many charges which fall little, if at all, as the size is cut down. Moreover, it is notorious that in the past large families have commonly meant not large houses, but overcrowding; and we can hardly make it a part of our post-war policy to ensure the continuance of this overcrowding by reducing the size of houses in proportion to the fall in the size of the average family.

It is true that with more old people in the population there will be more households of two or even of one person. But the extent to which we can set out to build small dwellings for such households is bound to depend on the ease with which people can change houses as their needs alter. Probably much more than has been done ought to be done to provide small, well-equipped, labour-saving houses for elderly and childless persons; but it is a mistake to suppose that such dwellings can be provided on the cheap, and fantastic to suggest that all households ought to be made to move into dwellings which are just big enough for them, on a basic standard of accommodation, irrespective of their wishes, their ties of friendship and neighbourhood, and of such considerations as that they may have invested their lives' savings in buying the houses in which they actually live.

That does not silence the objectors. Even if there will be a considerable increase in the number of separate families immediately after the war they argue that it will be a great mistake to try to meet this temporary need by extending the building industry to a size at which it cannot be sustained for more than a few years. Would it not be wiser, as happened after the last war, to keep the number of families artificially down by *not* building houses for them, and thus compelling them to share houses, until the period of exceptional demand is over? This is an argument which few people dare proclaim in public; but it is very popular behind closed doors.

This view is closely connected with the opinion that the housing boom of the 'thirties was abnormal, and is not likely to be repeated. In a sense it was abnormal; and it is most unlikely that anything approaching the number of persons who bought relatively expensive houses in the 'thirties with the aid of expensive finance from Building Societies and Insurance Companies will ever be able to do the same again. If the *need* for houses is to be measured by the *effective demand* for them at the prices they cost in the 'thirties—or rather at those prices scaled up to allow for the rise in building costs—it can be concluded with entire assurance that there will be no big demand for houses after the war, and that, so far from needing to expand the building industry beyond its pre-war capacity, we must expect it to be drastically cut down. On this showing, we can be sure that the new post-war families will not be able to become independent households, that squalor and overcrowding will continue, and that town and country planning will have to go by default.

This is just what quite a number of powerfully placed persons, even if they do not positively wish it to happen, would much sooner see happen than acquiesce in any big expansion of municipal or other public building at subsidised rents.

The House of Commons has recently been told that the average cost of cottage-building has risen by at least 105 per cent. above the level of 1939, and that it will take prodigious subsidies to make the promised cottages available at rents which rural workers, even with their higher war-time wages, can possibly be expected to pay. Clearly, if this is to be the cost level at which post-war house-building programmes are to be carried through, either the State will have to find prodigious sums in subsidies, or the effective

demand for houses will be small, and there will be no call for any big building programme.

There is this to be said on the side of those who argue against a large-scale housing programme on the ground of expense—that the higher the money cost in relation to the accommodation given in return for it, the smaller the post-war programme will have to be. But the remedy surely is not to deny houses to those who need them, and therewith employment to those who need jobs, but rather to take every possible step to keep the cost of building and of builders' materials in check, as well as to ensure that the money required for housing shall be available at the lowest practicable rates of interest and the land required at the lowest price that is fair. The first of these things calls for a much more drastic control over the financial side of the building industry, including the supply of builders' materials, and for the complete maintenance of these controls after the war. It also almost certainly calls for direct public building, through some sort of public Building Corporation, on a considerable scale, and for the direct use by the State of released war factories for the fabrication of standardised materials and components. The second condition calls for extensive municipal building, in lieu of the more expensive financial methods of house-purchase through Building Societies and Insurance Companies, and as a means of providing an adequate supply of houses, not for purchase, but for renting at a reasonable weekly cost. The third, relating to the land, calls for the adoption of effective measures of land control going at least as far as the proposals made in the Uthwatt Report.

So far the Government appears to have made no advance at all towards any of these three things. It has announced its intention of bringing about an expansion of the labour force of the building industry to a maximum of a million and a quarter, as compared with rather over a million in 1939; but it does not seem to have done anything else, beyond adjuring local authorities to have ready plans for building for the first post-war year, with a possibility of longer-term plans in reserve. The plain facts, however, are that the local authorities cannot grant proper plans until they know under what broad conditions post-war building is to be carried on, and that the proposed labour force of 1,250,000 will *not* be needed if building costs are allowed to remain as badly out of hand as they appear to be at present. The entire situation is about as unsatisfactory as it could possibly be; and it is difficult not to reach the conclusion that the reason for the muddle is that the Government cannot make up its mind between those who regard the building industry as an instrument for meeting the consumers' needs for houses and other buildings and those who regard it as the handmaid of a group of vested interests.

A LONDON DIARY

"GRAND news! Did you expect it?" "No, it came with the shock of something that happens that you haven't been allowing yourself to expect for fear that it might upset your judgment if you banked on it." "What will happen now?" "The danger, of course, is that we bolster up clerical Fascism under a prettier name and that the peasants of *Fontamara* remain as poor and helpless and bullied as ever. I am not going to throw up my hat until I see us getting rid of that peculiarly self-seeking class of pseudo-aristocratic Italian landlords who have always backed Mussolini." "I suppose the Italian army won't change round and fight on our side against the Germans?" "That would be a stab in the front, wouldn't it?" "What'll happen to Mussolini? I heard somebody say that he had lost his only chance of escape when he failed to make himself Pope." "I'm not sure whether he need be very frightened. When people talk about punishing war criminals, it's always Germans they think of. That is because the Germans seem permanently dangerous to us, while we are only at war with Italy because Mussolini came in on Hitler's side. British policy has always been to support Musso. You couldn't find greater eulogies conferred on any foreign statesman than in two speeches that Chamberlain made about him in the House of Commons. Our upper class didn't turn a hair when his gang were beating up progressives, crushing trade unions and political parties and suppressing all independent thought and life in Italy and drilling Italians into supine stupidity and dosing old women with castor oil and making war on the Abyssinians. By the way, the NEW STATESMAN was banned in Italy since 1924. That was because it said that Mussolini murdered Matteotti." "Do you want Mussolini brought to a public trial, then?" "Ah! that raises a very difficult problem. Read the story of the decision to hang the Kaiser. You will find the Cabinet discussion, including a remarkable statement on the subject by Lord Birkenhead, in Lloyd George's *Truth About the Peace Treaties*, Vol. I. To try him and others like him for their numberless crimes seems at first only right and logical, but it is not easy. In the public mind here he is a figure of fun rather than anything else, and those who tried him would have uneasy memories of having licked his boots for years. And what would be the effect in Italy of the execution of their national leader by a foreign tribunal? The story of such trials is not reassuring. In his biography Winston Churchill quotes a grand remark of his own during the Boer War. He said, 'Grass grows quickly over the battlefield; over the scaffold never.'" "What would you do, then; push him off on a barren island, like Napoleon?" "Perhaps, but far and away the best thing would be to get him bumped off quickly. If he was shot by us during the war that would be no harm, but the right people to kill him are the Italians whom he has fooled and misled into three of the wickedest wars in history. I hope he is killed quickly by Italians."

* * *

I well remember seeing Mussolini in January, 1938. I had come straight from Barcelona where Fascist armies were completing the foul work that had begun in a plot engineered from Rome. No people ever fought more bravely for their freedom than the Spaniards or were more cruelly betrayed by the democratic Powers. I was feeling pretty bad about it when I got to Rome and saw Mr. Chamberlain step out of the train on to the platform, where the Duce met him. They walked up and down, smiling to the crowd which contained a large contingent of the comfortable British who never left off telling us how nice it is to live in Italy now that the Fascists have made the trains run to time. In the afternoon Chamberlain stood side by side with the Duce and watched little boys doing military exercises in the stadium, and at night there was a great reception where the two paraded for our respectful admiration. When I recall this I feel deep joy at his exit. It means that the tide has turned: when one dictator goes, others shake: when the people get a little liberty they will want more. Ever since the March on Rome reaction has steadily gained ground throughout Europe. Inevitably it culminated in Hitler and this war. The world that is coming will not be very pleasant, but it will be a world in which common people again have hope.

* * *

On Sunday there was a wedding in the village. Everyone was there and the villagers formed an archway for the bride and bridegroom. He works in a factory; she on a farm. Instead of the traditional arch of swords, familiar at fashionable military weddings, the arch was made of the tools which a land girl may use in her day's work. The girls were on one side and the men on the other. The bride and bridegroom passed under hoes and hay rakes, pitchforks and hedging tools. The pub in the evening was remarkably merry. After closing hours they danced as if, someone suggested, the war was over. "Well," said my friend Jones, who was master of the ceremonies, "why not? The war's reached a stage when we ought to be able to be a little jolly." "I don't know about that," said another, "I don't expect it looks very jolly to the boys in North Africa and Sicily." We didn't know it, but at that very moment the news of Mussolini's exit had just been announced over the European news service.

* * *

The son of a farm worker who lives near me went before the war to work for a big armament firm. He was always a clever fellow. He has produced an invention of considerable importance. Knowing the habits of these firms I asked what advantage he had gained from the patent. He told me that the firm had offered him £10 for it outright. Fortunately, he had been smart and had gone to the Ministry which had accepted it and which is paying him a royalty of £1 per hundred. As something like 100,000 of the articles in question have already been ordered, and several times that number are likely to follow, he looks like making a good thing out of it. But that was because George has a good head on his shoulders and took legal advice. What puzzles me is why a great armaments firm should attempt to treat an employee, who might, incidentally, make other inventions useful to them, with such extraordinary meanness. After all, the payment would come out of E.P.T., wouldn't it—at least for the war period? No doubt that is the clue; they wanted to buy the patent from him for next to nothing, so that no inroad should be made on their E.P.T. payment to the Government? That must be it; their motives were, I'm sure, purely patriotic.

* * *

Recently a friend took her son, age seven, to a large suburban preparatory school for his entrance examination. Together with the other parents of potential pupils she was invited to listen to an address by the Headmaster on the qualities desirable in parents. Incredible as it may sound, the following are points upon which he laid special emphasis: The boys are sent to the school on trust; questions, therefore, as to their progress from parents would not be welcomed and no demands to look over the school would be acceded to; such questions and demands were an implied breach of trust. Dress was very important; each boy must be equipped with school blazer and shorts, which must at all times be worn; rubber shoes must be provided for gym. The Headmaster went out of his way at this point to deprecate the wartime practice whereby boys who had grown too large for their gym. shoes passed them to smaller boys, receiving in their turn the cast-offs of boys older than themselves. "This," the Headmaster intimated, "was a most objectionable procedure. Objectionable on grounds of health; boys might infect one another. Two differently coloured football shirts must be provided, since a boy never knew until the day of the match whether he would be playing for 'the school,' in which case he would require school colours, or 'the rest,' who only wore whites. He knew, of course, of the existence of coupons, but he was not deterred by them. Boys who came to his school were required to dress properly and parents must make sacrifices in order to see that they might do so." There was more in the same vein.

How they do go on, I thought, these snobby little preparatory schools with their school colours and ties and team spirits and tones and all the rest of it; and they will still go on, I gather, under Mr. Butler's scheme, if people are foolish enough to send their children to them. The worst that can happen to them is State inspection. I wonder what the inspector thinks of the prohibitions in regard to gym. shoes? But perhaps he does not know.

* * *

The Registrar-General reports a continued rise in births; the rate for the first quarter of this year is the highest since 1928. Reason? Partly, of course, the circumstances of war with a large part of the population in uniform and at home. Most important, practically everyone has work and "security of employment." Births normally follow the rhythm of the trade cycle. But what of popular belief that the ratio of boy to girl

babies rises in wartime? Some support is given to this view from the quarter's returns; the proportion has risen from an average of 1,058 to 1,000 females for 10 preceding first quarters, to 1,070. Some scientists, unwilling to accept the mystical explanation that Nature replaces war casualties, suggest that this phenomenon is due to better health conditions. The argument goes like this. It is a fact that more boys are born than girls, but more die in childhood. Presumably more boys are also conceived, but fail to survive until birth. When pregnant women are well fed the wastage is less, and consequently the excess of male births is increased. A good and possible theory. Anyway, it is true that health and nutrition are better at the present time for the mass of the people than they are in peace. There is no more striking commentary on the way we run our affairs in time of peace.

* * *

How shortage stimulates greed might be a good field for a Mass Observation study. A friend has sent me the catalogue, with realised prices marked, of an auction sale held recently in a largish country house in Sussex. The contents were evidently the commonplace, rather expensive stuff typical of an owner with more money than taste, but sufficiently in quality to attract from London a host of dealers with whose bids the local folk excitedly competed. Result, a quite grotesque inflation of values—Tottenham Court Road cabinets going at twice the pre-war price of Sheraton; £100 paid for a small radio-gram; cotton sheets (costing, say, 15*s.* in 1939) sold for £5 the pair. Most absurd of all, a utility bicycle realised £18, though its purchaser could have bought an identical article (new) at £8 12*s.* from the stock displayed in the window of the village ironmonger a mile away. A collective attack, you would say, of auction-hysteria, heightened by the absence of normal outlets for material desire. Dr. Goebbels would doubtless seize on this story as proof positive that the British people have lost all faith in the stability of their currency; but he would be wrong. Auction-room excitement apart, I fancy that few of us, these days, are quite immune from morbid appetites. Myself normally the least acquisitive of men, I will confess to a recurrent passionate desire to buy a prohibitively expensive and highly incongruous carpet.

* * *

News comes to me from the U.S.S.R. which explains some of the extreme anxiety recently shown there about the treatment of Hess in this country. It got about that Hess's wife was being shown great favour by the British. The mistake I am told, arose from the fact that Mrs. (Myra) Hess was giving concerts in London.

CRITIC

MORNING HYMN OF THE I.C.I.

"*The cartel, like the big business unit, may not be perfect in conception or faultless in operation, but the achievements of both have made for public benefit and progress.*"—Lord McGowan in the *Sunday Times*, July 25th.

Shares that are up may higher rise,
Prices need fear no fall,
We who possess monopolies
Shall rest content with all.

We are content with what we have
Because we have the whole,
Our private combines we shall save
From national control.

Trade competition cannot rage
While we restrict supply—
The fullness of the coming age
Be with the I . C . I ! *Amen.*

ANON

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to "Corporal."

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

"In a few minutes we are all going to end by singing the School Song. I am always prepared to burst my lungs singing *Floreat Rugbeia*, and I know you boys are going to raise the roof singing *Floreat Schola Varvicensis*.

"The Floreat is written in Latin, and I've not the slightest idea what the words mean, but I know it makes me feel good inside. So spread the gospel of the benefit of a Public School education and help us to keep our status, and increase the prestige of the grand old Public School." (Applause.)

The proceedings closed with the singing of the "School Song."—Report of Warwick School prize distribution in *Royal Leamington Spa Courier and Warwickshire Standard*.

A mother at Birmingham Assizes yesterday said of her 30-year-old collier son, killed in a road accident, that he showed no signs of marrying.

"He never looked at women. He preferred rabbiting," she said.

The Judge: Why do you say it in that tone of voice? What would happen to England if every young man took such a view?—*News Chronicle*.

Speculators wanting to gamble in Italian Government bonds yesterday found that none were to be had on the London Stock Exchange. A leading dealer said: "The price of Italian 7 per cent. bonds is up to £47 10*s.*, but there are no sellers." The bonds were £28 earlier this year. Before the war they were normally more than £100.—*Daily Express*.

Coroner's warning to mother: "Whether you think a child is dead or not, don't place it under a bucket in the garden in future."—*Hastings and St. Leonards Observer*.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY

A GOOD bookseller is part of the vital basis of civilisation. It is not only that he has got about the best commodity there is in the world to sell. The very fact that he is a good bookseller means that he draws about his shop most of the people who have something to say. A town without a good bookseller is like a body without a soul. One sees the appearance of life, but it lacks the factor which gives it the saving grace of personality.

Fortune took me the other week-end to Sheffield. No one, I imagine, believes that, with all its wealth and importance, Sheffield is a thing of beauty or a joy for ever. Most of its buildings are second-rate; almost all its streets are devoid of anything but drabness. It has, no doubt, a university, and I am told that in the realms of fuel technology and the study of local dialect its academic achievements have been high. But if I wanted to justify Sheffield on the judgment-day, it is not to its wealth, or its size, or its importance that I should draw the attention of the recording angel. It is to a little bookshop on the Glossop Road where, for something like sixty years, anyone who has wanted either an ordinary book or an out-of-the-way book, even a really rare one, has resorted in the sober confidence that, outside the great booksellers who hardly recognise your needs unless you want a first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, or a copy of *The Pickwick Papers* with the several hundred points that the expert can enumerate, you will sooner or later find the book you want.

The man who founded the shop is dead, and I did not know him myself. Those who did speak of him as a great gentleman who embodied the famous aphorism of William of Wykeham that manners makyth man. He was as courteous and helpful to the schoolboy who wanted a second-hand copy of Hall and Knight's *Algebra* as he was to the bibliophile who sought the Kilmarnock edition of Burns. He knew the "points" of books in the way that Capablanca knew the openings of chess. He lived to be eighty-two, and, to the very end, he handled a book with that special kind of loving care that Sir Francis Younghusband reports of his botanist on the Lhasa expedition. I have talked with those who knew him, and they all speak of him with a note of affection that one reserves for an intimate friend.

I heard of his shop in a curious way. A young naval lieutenant, home on leave from the Mediterranean, told me at Keighley that if I wanted books on the civil wars of the seventeenth century there was no place in the North of England to rival the place in the Glossop Road. I went there the other day to find that the widow still kept it going. When I went in, I almost thought that I was about to speak to Queen Victoria. She is eighty-six years of age, but there is not a hint in her demeanour of failing powers. The shop is crowded with books, in no sort of order, and on every conceivable subject from astrology to Zoroastrianism. When I explained what I was searching for, she was almost humble in her apologies. Since her husband had died, she had sold the best of what the shop contained; what I could see would be but the remnant of what had once been a grand collection. But she invited me to look round with a gesture as queenly as though she was giving me the accolade of knighthood. And for nearly two hours I almost forgot that there was, outside, the biggest war in history. I picked up pamphlets of the seventeenth century, pamphlets of the eighteenth century, pamphlets on the early history of Free Thought, books on the struggle which led to the Reform Bill of 1832. Half of my two hours were shot through with a bitter pang, for I knew that, in the two little crowded rooms, I was unable to see more than half of what was there; and there was in my bones the conviction that I should leave with most of the things I really wanted unseen and unsuspected. As it was, trains do not wait; and I can only say that the thirty or so volumes that I acquired I picked out with a sense of that excitement unknown to those who lack the impulse which makes book-hunting so much the most adorable form of detection in the world.

They were grand books and absurdly cheap. But if I had found nothing at all, the old lady would have been an ample compensation for my time. At eighty-six, she had not only dignity and charm. She knew all her stock. She knew the "points" of the rarities she possessed. She explained that the shop was not what it had been because, during the last four years, she had sold many of its treasures to the trade. She spoke of her husband's outlook as a bookseller.

The provincial dealer could not specialise; his range, therefore, was as wide as the world of books. He had knowledge of the collections in old country houses, not of the first order, which often gave him access to finds which the great dealers in London overlooked. She and her husband cherished their shop not merely as a means of livelihood. She spoke of clients who were scholars with an affection almost like that of a mother for her children; when she had found some book for one of them which he had long sought it was obviously a red-letter day in her life. As clients came and went, she dealt with them in a mood of gracious courtesy that no words can quite express; it was a mingling of dignity and kindliness which made me think of Miss Matty in *Cranford*. And she was so alert and vital, so quick in comment, so swift in appreciation, that I felt, as I talked to her, that I was dealing with a great member of a noble race. Not seldom I had to remind myself that she was

hty-six, for, a very slight deafness apart, she d the nimbleness of mind, the vigour of action, a woman of half her age.

She told me with a chuckle of amusement of bookseller in Kent who had written to her ering to buy, if carriage was paid, all her stock biographies at sixpence a volume. As though was unaware, she smilingly said, that an erest in biography was the fashion of the ment. We spoke of a mutual friend, once, me fifteen years ago, a teacher in the University Sheffield, and she remembered his habits as a llector as though he had been in the shop ly the day before. When I took my little e of purchases to be paid for, she made out a l in a handwriting as clear and firm as a copper-te model. And she commented on some of em as she entered them on the bill as a specialist bibliography might comment. She handled em, too, as though they were something more an sheets of paper bound in boards. To her ch was redolent of a history of some visit her sband had made, some find in which he had ken pleasure. And I shall never forget the ile with which she greeted my expression of ntent at what I had found. It was less like bookseller bidding farewell to a client than like great hostess who makes a guest to whom she s given a generous hospitality create in him the rning to return.

It was a magic shop, and she was a magic old dy. But perhaps what was most lovely in r magic was the living reality of her husband her. She prized the books she had because had searched for them. She carried on his ork, not merely to live, but because he had red for his profession. She knew the proven-ce of every out-of-the-way book she had; d I shall long remember the silver tones in hich she told of how he had found them. I ve seen a good deal of gracious old age. In r. Justice Holmes it had a nobility which was e a challenge to every generation below it. Mr. and Mrs. Webb it has had an ardour and vacity which makes one feel that they have, in ct, never grown old. There is a legend which ys that G.B.S. is eighty-seven; but that, of ourse, is nothing more than part of the fantastic ythology he has foisted upon our epoch. I ve seen Lord Morley, professionally wise and nsciously aphoristic; and Mr. Birrell, whose uckle of sheer delight, as when he used to tell burying in his garden the nineteen volumes of annah More, is an unforgettable memory. I ve read the great tale of Mr. Gladstone's final sit to Oxford, when the range and vitality his discourse held his whole audience spell-ound. I knew, if slightly, old Robert Apple-arth, and heard from his own lips the tale of he Junta, and his stories of the visits to London Kossuth and Mazzini and his horror at the *up d'état* of 1852. I even saw in Dublin, when he was well over a century old, Miss Katherine lunket, the daughter of Pitt's Irish chancellor, ho told me of her emotion at Byron's death, and how, in 1847, the *femme de concierge* had sked her, returning in the early dawn from a all at the Elysée, to enter quietly lest the German valid, M. Henri Heine, who inhabited the ansard above, be disturbed in the fitful search r a sleep he needed in his illness.

They are all of them sources of that enchant-ent which gives its lyric quality to life. My ld lady in the little bookshop in Sheffield will ot find, like those I have named, a place in the ictionary of National Biography, American or ritish. Most of the people who enter her shop ill see only a little old lady who does not have he particular book they want. Many of them ill groan over the heaped-up piles which makes ne somehow certain that it is hiding from sight he special volume one has vainly searched for uring many years. But I shall never forget a isit which seemed to place me in an age long ast, when time was not one's jailer, when eorge Eliot and Dickens and Trollope were still he favourites of the public, when Meredith had ot yet captured his public, and men shook their eads over Jowett and Renan. Somehow she gives to Sheffield a crown which neither its steel nor its forges can attain. She has wisdom and patience and kindliness, and her private romance has left her still in love. Beside Mr. Quaritch or Dr. Rosenbach, her little shop is, no doubt, as unimportant as her history has been trivial. Yet I left it feeling that I had seen a Queen in full possession of her kingdom; and I knew that its boundaries were as wide as space and not less eternal than time.

HAROLD J. LASKI

"LOTTIE DUNDASS"

Lottie Dundass at the Vaudeville Theatre, is a short moving drama in two acts of two scenes. Miss Enid Bagnold's amusingly original satirical fantasia, *Serena Blandish*, was dramatised in America and was a success, but this is her first play of her own making. It shows marked aptitudes for writing for the stage: the characters are distinct and offer opportunities to good actors; the construction shows a due heed for psychological preparation; the plot creates suspense and satisfies it in a moving climax. The two parts which ask most from their interpreters, Mrs. Dundass and "Lottie" her daughter, were admirably played by Dame Sybil Thorndike and Miss Ann Todd, respectively. It was no surprise that Dame Sybil Thorndike should bring to life before our eyes an elderly, poor, middle-class mother of seven children; a woman with the memory of an awful calamity lurking behind her daily cares, and a stale ache of dread in her heart on behalf of at least one of her children, who is, perhaps, for that very reason, her favourite among them. No actress can convey better the qualities of any character she respects, or suggest with a more literal—I might almost say—prosaic delicacy, the union in a woman of tenderness and strength. In a part in which the flag must be flying even after the fort has fallen, there is none to touch her: I can still see her in Claudel's *L'Otage* when I open that play, across—is it—over twenty years? But what was a surprise to me was to watch Miss Ann Todd interpreting so vividly and adroitly the violent and morbidly rapid alternations of mood, which the character of Lottie demanded. Everything—the whole play, depended upon her doing that, and her success was as obvious to us as her own delight in acting for once in a while a part with a wide emotional range.

The play is psychological drama; a study in pathology one might call it, which, had it been made early in the century, would have been an outstanding feat of insight. But to-day novelists and playwrights know their way much better about the sick darkening mind (they have guide-books), and those regions where sanity, and perhaps genius, shades into madness. The pathological aspect of the play may possibly limit its appeal among the incurious, but this would be their loss. For, as the Renaissance knew, the drama of being mad is deeply exciting; and the tragedy in which it involves others is reflected in this story.

From the point of view of construction the play begins perfectly. The opening dialogue leads straight to the heart of the theme. The curtain rises: a good, steady young man is confiding in Mrs. Dundass that he is in love with her daughter; and she, distracted from time to time by off-stage shouts from her younger children cheerfully yelling for this or that, tells him (as she had resolved to do should anyone want to marry one of her children) that their father is in Broadmoor. His trial, five years ago, had created a great sensation; for Absolom Dundass, who had strangled a woman without apparent motive, was the son of the most famous of all modern actors. Absolom had once thrown a bucket of pitch over his father's statue, an action which had helped towards the more merciful verdict: he had been possessed by crazy envy of him, and an incontrollable desire, though he had no talent, to excel himself upon the stage. The young man is disturbed, but persistent. Then she tells him that Lottie, too, is stage-struck, but that she has been compelled to force her to drop her training at the Academy because she is subject to violent heart attacks: "It has been sad and hard on her nature."

Here the playwright has missed an opportunity. Mrs. Dundass should add, "It seems they thought very well of her, too, in a play called 'Evelyn Innes' the pupils acted." And this success should have been mentioned again in Act II when Lottie's friend suggests her to a distracted manager as a last moment substitute in the part of Evelyn. Also brought up in Lottie's brief interview with the manager admirably and humorously played, by the way, by Mr. Winston. You see the weak point in the surface narrative, is the improbability of a young girl's taking a leading part at a moment's notice and getting through two acts with applause. But if, in addition to possessing a name as famous in the theatre as that of Irving (a point which is insisted on) she had produced a letter referring to her triumph at the Academy, this improbability would have been considerably reduced. The rest of Act I is employed in presenting Lottie herself. The note which is struck again and again, like an ominous gong, is the devouring egotism of this fascinating little creature. She enters in a grim passion because her girl-friend has not waited for her in the snow at the bus-stop. Mrs. Dundass is the one person who can manage her, though managing is saying too much. But at least her mother knows that such storms blow over as suddenly as they gather. Lottie feels intensely, which enables her to charm and dominate others; but only what concerns herself. She cannot attend to other people except as they contribute to an inner drama of which she is the heroine. Her mother tries to read her a letter from her brother at the front. No doubt at some moments Lottie adored him—when also he could take a part on the stage of her own ego. But now he simply does not exist. Even things that concern her most nearly—her heart disease, for instance—are only incidents in that drama. As her mother matter-of-factly tells the young suitor, "Lottie rather enjoys being in danger of death." There are minutes when the poor child is aware that there is an awful screen between her and reality which turns everybody except her mother—and she also sometimes—into shadows: *Shadows who get in her way, too.* There is a poignant moment when Lottie, her face buried in her arms, asks her mother the question which we have been asking ourselves, "Does she resemble her grandfather or her father?" Is this pent-up genius or madness? Her mother does not reply; the next minute Lottie has forgotten the agony which had prompted that question. The sequel shows she is her father's daughter.

Scene 1 of Act II provides just the right amount of relief; the comic desperation of the manager and the cast of "Evelyn Innes" when it seems impossible that the proper understudy of the leading lady can arrive in time. But the understudy does. Unknown to the others, and just before the curtain, she rushes into the dressing-room. Lottie, radiant with expectation, has to strip off her stage clothes. It is a poignant moment when her pretty "Evelyn" dress falls to the girl's feet, and Miss Ann Todd took full advantage of it. There she stands stunned, frail, half-naked; in her hand a horse-hair belt she would have worn. Suddenly, as the other girl stoops over the washing basin, something goes click in Lottie's brain. She whips the belt round the understudy's throat. There is a small sickening struggle; the body is curtained, and a sofa pushed in front of the curtain. And Lottie, exalted now to frenzy, jumps again into the skin of "Evelyn Innes." The corpse is discovered by her mother in the last interval of the performance, and when Lottie has a heart attack she does not give her the saving remedy. The last words are spoken by Lottie's friend, while the girl's body lies limp across her mother's knee, "I think you must have done right." Miss Bagnold, that was a mistake. It was too obvious that it was better Lottie should die; it did not require saying—we all felt it. It was dramatically right to make Rose instinctively rush to the remedy when Lottie first fainted and thrust it at her mother; it was dramatically right for her mother not to use it. You had worked up climax and solution beautifully, but the last words of all should have been in a key a little above the rest of the play, and so that we, in that state of sympathy with your characters up to which you had led us, might forget at the end pathology in tragedy. (Recall the sudden lift Chekov gives to realism at the end of *The Three Sisters.*) A still, sad speech of a *mater dolorosa*, when the torture of a loved child is over—that was the right finale for your excellent short drama. And how well Sybil Thorndike would have spoken it!

DESMOND MACCARTHY

GREAT RESIGNATIONS

Dictators seldom chuck their situation
Few tyrants care to give themselves the sack,
Napoleon once resolved on abdication,
His crown renounced, and after snatched it back;
Old Diocletian is a classic sample
And Charles the Fifth gave up the daily grind,
Alfonso is a modern choice example,
And Mussolini also has resigned.

The sawdust Caesar, the new Machiavelli,
The Fascist version of the lion-heart
Who failed to armour-plate the underbelly
Of which he was himself the softest part;
The new Napoleon has got out from under
And will not have a chance to change his mind—
Great resignations are a nine-days' wonder,
And Mussolini also has resigned.

As doom inexorably forward marches
He recognises that no fate ordains
That he should fight upon his fallen arches
To the last drop of sawdust in his veins.
With one great gesture of renunciation
He fades out, leaving not a wrack behind;
And with an even greater resignation
Rome learns that Mussolini has resigned.

When Hitler's General Staff (or intuition)
Advise he should be put upon the shelf,
And when the Führer in this strange position
Must hand his resignation to himself,
The Chancellor may seek to use persuasion
But will recall, before it is declined,
The Kaiser crawled out on a like occasion,
And Mussolini also has resigned.

SAGITTARIUS

PLAYS AND PICTURES

French Paintings at the Beaux Arts and Redfern Galleries

French paintings by the great names from Manet to Matisse having become almost as scarce in London as a 1920 Cheval Blanc, pictures by the obscurer artists are being brought up from the cellars. This is a most welcome move, for some of these men have been much underrated. The Barbizon School overproduced no less grossly than the modern Ecole de Paris, and the reaction against the favourites of eighty years ago has been correspondingly violent. But Troyon and Daubigny, Harpignies and Vallon, were most accomplished men who could paint charmingly. Lépine, again, though often producing Corot-and-water, was a most sensitive artist; and, in a different tradition, Ribot is masterly. The astute collector will notice the absurd disparity between the prices commanded by such men and those to which fashion has raised a Boudin and a Fantin-Latour. A large exhibition, say at the National Gallery, of such pictures would be intensely interesting, if the exhibits were chosen with great care from the immense number that must exist in this country. Meanwhile, the few, but on the whole choice, specimens now on view at the Beaux Arts and Redfern Galleries can be recommended. The Redfern, moreover, has a remarkable early Guillaumin, and two excellent pictures by Loiseau, an Impressionist little known here, whose style is very close to Pissarro's.

"It's Time to Dance," at the Winter Gardens

The return of Jack Buchanan to the London stage in a new musical comedy is an event to which many were looking forward. We have him with us again, in appearance not more than thirty, and it is sad to note that only two of the numbers which he sings are worthy of him, that the jokes he has to crack are feeble, and that his personality is almost drowned in the pinchbeck of a wartime super-production. Almost . . . but whenever he is on the stage one has only to watch him to remember that for the last twenty years or more he is the only comedian who has carried on the tradition and improved on the technique of George Grossmith, junior. It is to be hoped that the younger generation will love him as well as their parents do, and that some day they will congratulate themselves on having appreciated his quality as their elders did that of Joseph Coyne and Nelson Keys.

THE MOVIES

"Undercover," at London Pavilion
"Striptease Lady," at the Odeon
"The Man in Grey," at Tivoli and Marble Arch

The areas of Europe that have suffered from being taken over by Hollywood are being gradually reclaimed. Nothing perhaps can be done to save stricken Paris, or London during the blitz, but there are unminiverised parts of Kent and Narvik goes on changing hands. *Undercover*, a film of Jugoslavia, may be regarded as a victory over the terror of *Chetniks*. Not that it tells us anything new or authoritative about a country whose landscape, politics and customs we should like to know better, but the old thriller ground is given dignity. A test of this kind of film is the reaction it produces by its glimpses of tragedy. Usually, when the firing squad turns up and a machine-gun sweeps along the line, we withhold our emotion, not caring to be got at, even for a second, in the middle of adventures that belong with Baroness Orczy and Dr. Fu Manchu. *Undercover*, though in the thriller category, has a firmer grip on reality; and the schoolroom scene ending with the murder of half-a-dozen children moves and horrifies as it should. The Nazi military governor (Godfrey Tearle) commits this outrage without a gesture; if in the moments leading up to it he had glared through a monocle or dangled a riding whip we should have witnessed the execution unmoved. The Nazis in this film are unusually convincing, and so too are the guerrilla leader (John Clements), the undercover surgeon (Stephen Murray), the schoolmistress (Mary Morris) and the old farmer (Tom Walls). Quiet acting and the thrills of sabotage and lovely mountain scenery (Wales, is it?) fill out the rather meagre suggestions of Jugoslavia.

Striptease Lady is a mystery piece about the jungle of New York burlesques. True to type, it has a snappy beginning and a sloppy end, goes on from one murder to a second and an attempt at a third, trails red herrings that don't prevent one from seeing the solution from a mile off, and mixes a vivid background with the phoniest of situations. Good glimpses of burlesque acts, with Barbara Stanwyck as a striptease lady who doesn't striptease and Michael O'Shea as an endearing comic. Not bad, as screen 'tecs go.

The Man in Grey is a sentimental melodrama of the nineteenth century and goes on for two hours of . . . "Don't lie to me!" . . . "Quick, the back stairs" . . . "The last of the Rohans" . . . "The day without you is too long." . . . James Mason, too skilled an actor for this sort of thing, is in a vile temper throughout and one sympathises. Perhaps I have too pronounced an antipathy for historical romances in general, but my feelings about *The Man in Grey* are expressed by the Clarissa of the film: "I don't think I can bear this. I can't! I really can't!"

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

ARMY OPINION

Sir,—The article by Mass Observation and the comments on it by Critic find me fully in agreement with the main lines expressed, but I feel that in both there is lacking a very important consideration. In fact, no article that I have yet read on service conditions seems to me to have considered the problem of the overwhelming majority of service men who are simply "disinterested."

I would not attempt to argue with those people who find in the Services intelligent, thinking men with clear cut ideas of the right angle; or men passionately interested in politics, Beveridge, art, or education. There are such and their numbers are possibly higher relatively than in "civvy street." Yet 2½ years of the ranks, and recently of O.C.T.U., coupled with remarks of my friends from all types of units, make me firmly convinced that a very large number of serving men—say 80 per cent.—have no ideas at all beyond getting out and staying out; the type to whom Critic refers, wanting only a wife and a garden. To cite just a few examples. The invasion of Sicily undoubtedly caused a stir, but observation has shown me that 9 out of 10 still read only the *Daily Mirror*, and that only for the cartoons. The Beveridge Report did cause a mi flutter of interest, but the emasculation of it by Parli ment evoked hardly a word of complaint. (Th banning of the A.B.C.A. report was quite a differe kettle of fish, and that was sensational news. But th was a direct grumble against the Army.) Of the squa of cadets, all of whom had passed a very stiff intelli gence test, less than 25 per cent. knew who Willia Temple was or what the Archbishop of Canterbu was doing: what was the meaning of Vansittartism on which side Hungary was fighting. And, though I do not suggest this is typical, I can guarantee the story of the private who under a year ago burst into a h with the news that France had fallen!

Reluctantly I have come to the conclusion that th political outlook of the Forces will not be permanently widened by the war. As Mass Observation shows, demobilisation is the thought uppermost in all their minds, but demobilisation means to them an armchair by the fire, "let the world leave me alone, and I'll leave it alone." Most men may say, "This must not happen again." I cannot see many of them taking active steps to prevent it.

CADET

THE TWO GERMANIES

Sir,—Now that Mussolini has resigned, Germany thrown on the defensive and a breach has been made in Sicily in Hitler's "Fortress of Europe," it becomes more than ever important to ascertain whether there really is an underground, resistant Germany to which we can appeal, or whether it is true, as the Vansittartites contend, that Fascism and aggression are born and bred in the German people.

This contention ignores the fact that Fascism and aggression have been characteristic of Italy, and in a peculiar but analogous form of Japan, for a longer time than of Germany, a fact that suggests that Fascism is a social rather than a national phenomenon.

The Vansittartites draw the conclusion from their view of the nature of German Fascism that no distinction should be made between the Nazi regime and the German people, and that the latter, even if they overthrow and destroy the former, are to be held responsible for Nazi beastliness. That is exactly what their Nazi rulers are trying to make the German people believe.

The *Times* on January 25th reported that the chief German propagandist, "Hans Fritsche, in a broadcast talk yesterday, resurrected the alleged intention of the United Nations to 'annihilate' Germany, and said that 'only the realisation of this fact could mobilise the forces of the German people necessary for winning the war.'"

Our Allies, who have suffered the horrors of Nazi occupation, are more ready to perceive the class origins of Fascism. Thus the late Polish Prime Minister, General Sikorski, in an interview with the New York newspaper *P.M.*, said that:

> The German lust for world domination takes its root obviously not in the Nazi party alone, but from several classes of the German people. These are the military caste, whose business is the science of conquest; the Junkers; the brazen exponents of race superiority; and German heavy industry, the economic imperialists. To these we owe it that the Nazis made their meteoric ascent within Germany. Without the destruction of these four groups no peace will be permanent.

On July 24th, 1942, the Action Committee of the French Socialist Party issued a policy manifesto which has reached this country. In a section entitled "no vindictive peace" the manifesto states that:

> Europe and the world of to-morrow will not be able to live unless the peace settlement excludes the abuse of force, the crushing and the territorial partition of beaten enemies.
>
> On this problem, too, French Socialism is proud to note that from the Treaty of Versailles until 1939 it denounced the warmongers who first were merciless to Republican Germany and then were feeble toward Hitler. . . .
>
> It will be necessary to include and even to compel Germany to take part in the organisation of a real and disarmed peace.

Those are the views and policies which in this year of 1942 the French Socialist Party—the French Section of the Workers' International—submit to the working classes of the world.

Stalin's denunciation of the Vansittartite view in his manifesto to the Red Army of February 23rd, 1942, and in his broadcast of November 9th will be remembered. A Free German Committee has been formed in Moscow and is issuing revolutionary appeals to the German people.

The *Saturday Evening Post* of May 29th, 1943, published an article by Edgar Snow, under the title, "I Saw It with My Own Eyes." The article gives sickening details of the things done by the Nazis in the U.S.S.R. It contains the following passage:

> The little partisan girls . . . told me in a matter of fact way of crimes committed against friends of theirs. . . . But then—and this seemed to me amazing—they casually remarked that several Germans were in their partisan group. These men had gone over to them with their arms and had been accepted.
>
> "I shouldn't think their lives would be worth a kopeck with you," I said frankly.
>
> "Why not?" asked Leza. "We are fighting only Hitlerites, and we don't want to exterminate the German people. We welcome all anti-Fascists, Germans as well as others. Our best machine-gunner is a German, and we all like him and trust him. He is a fine man."

Yugoslav partisans report that they have been joined by a number of German soldiers who are fighting bravely in their ranks. The International Brigade contained a German detachment that fought magnificently for the Spanish Republic. Our Pioneer Corps include a number of Germans. They fought well in the retreat to Dunkirk and most of them have volunteered for active service, although they know it means death and probably torture if they are captured by the enemy, not to mention reprisals on their families still in Germany.

Just before the war, Gestapo Chief Heinrich Himmler announced that in case of war he would need more concentration camps, would have to shoot many political prisoners and be utterly ruthless, because:

> We must have no illusions about the fact that any war in which we neglected the home front would lead to catastrophe.

The British press published the contents of a secret circular captured on a German officer in the Libyan campaign. It explained that volunteers should be recruited for the S.S. troops, whose numbers were being raised to 750,000. The right type of recruit would be accepted from the occupied countries as well as Germany. But they must all be picked men who could be relied upon never to mix with the proletariat. The regular army should not be used in case of trouble involving Germans (*Volksgenossen*). The fact that it was recruited from all classes of the population made it unreliable in such a situation.

The evidence suggests that Fascism is an international enemy which in Germany as elsewhere has its roots in the propertied classes and that we have allies in Germany, just as we evidently have in Italy, although our German allies may not be able to assert themselves until Germany's military position becomes as desperate as Italy's to-day.

LABOUR CANDIDATE

PROBLEM OF GERMANY

SIR,—Mr. Kingsley Martin, in the conclusion of his interesting article in your issue of July 24th on "The Problem of Germany," enumerates for the man in search of security after the war, a number of subjects which will have to be watched as well as Germany, who "for years to come will be the one Great Power from which no aggression is possible." This point of view is reasonable, but seems to me nevertheless to conceal considerable dangers. A Germany disarmed is by no means necessarily a Germany without influence in the world of affairs; and skilful diplomatic intrigue may once again restore what the fighting men imagined they had destroyed for ever. Since the entry of Russia into the war, I think it is accepted by most people that the Anglo-Soviet Alliance will be one of the chief buttresses of European peace in the post-war world, by some (among whom I count myself) that it will be *the* chief buttress. If Britain and Russia fall out, one or the other will sooner or later be drawn (as Mr. Martin, infers that the authors of the Chatham House pamphlet themselves believe) to the policy of building up Germany into a militarily powerful buffer State or ally. It therefore stands to reason that Germany will see her chance to avenge the second defeat by every kind of intrigue directed towards the destruction of the Anglo-Russian Alliance. That there may well be other enemies of the Alliance, who, once more mistaking ideological for power interests, will be active the moment the victorious Red Army goes home, I would not deny; but it seems to me that to be on guard against German initiative in the evil work will be the supreme, and not merely an incidental necessity. And I suggest that it is dangerously unrealistic to imagine that, once the Nazis, Junkers, Generals and industrial magnates are swept away—if they are swept away—a patriotic German, with his doubts about the possibility of realising the international Utopia in his time, will not applaud any action, secret or open, which disturbs the watchful concord of Britain and Russia.

London, W.1. JOHN LEHMANN

EDUCATION

SIR,—Your article "Mr. Butler Proposes" refers to the retention of the dual system as "deplorable." This word may well be applied to the complete failure of the proposals in any way to settle this controversy; they do in fact greatly extend the field of conflict, and prolong it into an indefinite future. A conflict may arise over any church school as to whether the building is capable of being brought up to standard and whether public money is to be spent on unsatisfactory buildings which are the property of a voluntary body. It is not made clear whether the Local Education Authority has the right to close a voluntary school which falls into the controlled class, nor whether (apart from "local agreement schools") denominational bodies are to be assisted out of public funds to build new schools. The proposals as to reserved teachers are full of uncertainty; the proportion of these will presumably depend (at any rate in part) on the proportion of children in the school who belong to the denomination concerned, and this may vary from time to time. The division of children into "syllabus children" and denominational children for the purpose of arranging for their separate teaching may now be extended into every school of every type. On the vexed question of the headship of controlled schools there is again uncertainty; the managers are to be consulted by the Local Education Authority on the appointment, but no one can say what this will amount to in the event of disagreement.

Apart from the benefits or the equity of the proposals themselves, educationists cannot fail to be apprehensive of the harmful effects on educational advance of all these complications, uncertainties and occasions for controversy.

CLARA D. RACKHAM

Cambridge.

"NEVER AGAIN"

SIR,—In the fourth Report of the "Never Again" Association of May, 1943, it is stated:

> "Last October our Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Tennant, was approached by Herr Walter Loeb, a German . . . The proposition made to the Vice-Chairman by Herr Loeb was that "Never Again" Association should become the Right Wing, and the "Fight for Freedom" Publishing Company should be the Left Wing of the anti-German Movement in this country . . . A special Executive Meeting was called, at which Herr Loeb's proposition was turned down by a unanimous vote . . ."

In your edition of July 10th you mention that you had been told a similar story. In my letter published in your issue of July 17th I called it a pure lie.

Mrs. Tennant in her letter published in your issue of July 24th does not repeat the lie. She now changes the version. It was not Herr Loeb who approached Mrs. Tennant, but at a meeting of the Executive of the "Never Again" Association the chairman,

FABER BOOKS

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This volume contains the three latest plays of William Saroyan: *The Beautiful People, Sweeney in the Trees*, and *Across the Board on Tomorrow Morning*. 7/6

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KEGAN PAUL

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EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE

E. Arnot Robertson
THE SIGNPOST

'The appearance of any novel by Miss E. Arnot Robertson arouses a preliminary pleasure: the dedication of her new novel 'To the good friends I am about to lose in Eire' adds to expectancy, like a fencer's salute.' *Observer*

A refreshingly unusual novel, marked by a shrewd and profound understanding of the various national characteristics, and the interest is kept alive throughout by entirely unexpected turns in the succession of events and by the vivid beauty of the writing.' *Manchester Guardian* [8s 6d net]

Although this book is temporarily out of stock with the publishers, a reprint is in preparation. Meanwhile, there may still be a few copies in the bookshops.

JONATHAN CAPE

Mr. Harold Jones, reported on informal suggestions which, though in the first sentence of the Minutes they are stated to have been made by Lord Vansittart and myself, were, as appears from the rest of the Minutes, in fact alleged to have been made by Lord Vansittart. In as far as "Fight for Freedom" and myself are concerned I repeat that no approach whatever was made, and this must be obvious to any impartial reader of the Minutes. However, I am sure you will agree that neither I nor anybody else can be held responsible for what was said at the meeting of the Executive of the "Never Again" Association.

It is a fact that at a meeting suggested by Mrs. Tennant by letter dated July 31st, 1942, she approached me about Left Wing support, but I told her that I was not the right person to deal with the request. When again by letter of September 15th, 1942, Mrs. Tennant approached me about co-operation with the T.U.C. I repeated to her that I was not the right person to help her. To that opinion I strictly adhered whenever similar approaches were made.

When Lord Vansittart, as I understand from the Minutes, quoted by Mrs. Tennant, suggested that he would not become President of the "Never Again" Association and that the two organisations could not be allied I think he did the only thing possible.

At Mrs. Tennant's party I did have a talk with Mr. Harold Jones. I was asked for advice on certain questions concerning Germany, and by letter dated October 16th, 1942, certain suggestions were sent to me for my consideration. This advice we gave as we will give it to anybody who wants to be informed about the true facts concerning German history.

Not by a scratch of even the most disorderly imagination can this be called "meddling in British politics". The future relations of the world to Germany do not only concern British politics, but the conscience of every human being, and following this conscience and with the co-operation of our Allied friends and under the leadership of approved British politicians do we follow our course.

WALTER LOEB

IN THE WITNESS BOX

SIR,—The method of putting an expert in the witness box and asking him questions which Mr. H. E. Potts describes in your last issue is the method that we have followed in the National Council of Labour Colleges for some considerable time. It has the advantage of avoiding the solid lecture which often bores audiences and the further advantage of compelling audiences to take an active part in the proceedings. Mr. Potts was specially referring to the education of the National Fire Service.

It may interest your readers to know that, despite the fact that we do the bulk of the educational work for the British Trade Union Movement, the Home Office did not include the National Council of Labour Colleges in the educational arrangements it encourages in the Fire Services. This official "exclusion" is not of course surprising as we are living in a capitalist state which looks upon orthodox education as one of its greatest safeguards. At the same time we are doing a certain amount of educational work for the Fire Service through our Trade Union connections.

While no one will deny the usefulness of discussion groups as a means of preventing boredom the fact of the matter is that what is at present required above all is an education that has the *very definite purpose of turning men's minds in the direction of a new social order and stimulating them in the struggle for that new social order*. At least 95 per cent. of the adult education that is provided, whether through educational organisations or through the B.B.C., does not have that objective. It reminds me of a notice an enterprising station master in a Swiss station once posted on his notice board: "Entrust your luggage to us and we shall send it in all directions."

J. P. M. MILLAR,
General Secretary.

National Council of Labour Colleges.
Tillicoultry, Scotland.

LAISSER FAIRE

SIR,—Your note on the Liberal Party Assembly contains a small but not wholly insignificant misrepresentation when it refers to a skirmish between the "Radical Action group on one side and Sir Andrew McFadyean and the apostles of pure *laisser faire* (Liberty Restoration League) on the other side." I know nothing of the Liberty Restoration League and have no association with it; I am not an apostle of "pure *laisser faire*"; I spoke on behalf of the Executive in support of the special resolution, which, in your own words, "represents considerable departures from pure *laisser faire*."

ANDREW MCFADYEAN

15 St. Helen's Place, E.C.3.

THE NEW GULLIVER

SIR,—Your film critic errs in saying that The New Gulliver has not until now been publicly screened in this country. It was shown in November, 1937, at the Forum Cinema, Charing Cross, where I was the Press representative.

I can understand your critic's ignorance of this showing, as it received scant notice in the Press. I issued invitations to some sixty critics. It was not a very busy week for them, but less than ten of them came to the Press Show. It seems to have taken a war to make Fleet Street realise the merits of Russian films. Other instances might be given.

DORE SILVERMAN

53 Alexandra Road, N.W.8.

[Mr. Whitebait writes: "I am sorry to have made this mistake through following the Tatler programme, which mentions only the Film Society performance."—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

LOW AMONG THE BLIMPS

SIR,—Events having answered questions as to the profit or otherwise of bombs on Rome, I shall excuse myself from accompanying Professor Brogan into reveries about the timelessness of beauty and speculations about what particular bombings, if any, in the waging of war for Liberty can be regarded as bombings for Liberty.

However, I respectfully ask permission to make a few rude noises about one point—which is, in fact, THE point. Professor Brogan suggests that cartoonists like myself should feel obliged not to give aid and comfort to savage and silly persons by uttering views with which the latter perchance may agree . . . Boy! Take this basketful of ethics-of-journalism to the pulping machine. Understand, we are not here to pass honest judgments but to purvey matter the other side doesn't like . . . Also, in the opinion of Professor Brogan comment upon grave subjects like bombing policy is worthless and dangerous coming from uninformed amateurs like ourselves. Presumably even comment in general terms should be left to expert professionals . . . Up with the shutters, Fleet Street! Heaven help the STATESMAN AND NATION on a night like this. *Vox populi* be blowed. Put a cork in it.

DAVID LOW

LORD RODD

SIR,—You are mistaken in thinking that Lord Rennell of Rodd is an Oxford Grouper.

A FRIEND

THIS ENGLAND

SIR,—On behalf of the reporters of the *Evening News*, Portsmouth, while we appreciate the honour of figuring at the head of your "This England" column last week, we would like to point out that the quotation about Leading Seaman Ogden's eyelashes, for which your happy correspondent received 5s., was taken from our own humorous column. Is it too much to expect of the mighty journalists of Great Turnstile that they should play the game with the work of their fellow hacks?

RUTH LEAVER
D. M. ANAND

Portsmouth.

[Your joke. Our mistake. May we again appeal to those who send us contributions to *This England* to give the full context?—Ed. *N.S. & N.*]

The New Age
EDWARD HULTON

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

LITTLE men from Birmingham and Bideford have been loud with delight at the bombing of Rome, but I seem to hear the formidable protests of a whole legion of English ghosts. Their captains are Milton and Gibbon, Byron and Shelley, Landor and Browning, Ruskin and Mr. Gladstone; but some of the stoutest hearts are to be found in the anonymous ranks, eager Victorian ladies, pilgrims or denizens, who thronged the hill-towns of Tuscany and Umbria, attendant at every *festa* and painting indefatigably in water-colours. In the larger cities these mild invaders built their own churches, Scottish as well as English, and even in out-of-the-way places there would be a service each Sunday in the largest hotel, conducted sometimes, I fear, by a chaplain who had left a narrow-minded English parish to find consolation in his unquestioned love for the Italians. When first I used to go to Italy the hotels and pensions still brimmed with the confidences of these belated Ruskinians; one had found a gloriously paintable "bit" halfway to the Certosa, another knew where cakes or figs could most "reasonably" be bought; and there was also everywhere a retired colonel or retrenching widow who in some corner of an echoing palace welcomed with tea and useful advice any compatriot who had come to venerate the *genius loci*.

Since Mussolini these colonies and pilgrimages have been dying. *Lederhosen* replaced veils and tussore parasols in piazza and cloister. More and more rarely did anyone disturb the serried Tauchnitzes that Brufani provided for his guests. The civilisation of amateur water-colourists is extinct, and the last time I was in Italy I searched vainly hill-town after hill-town, before tracking down, at Assisi, what may have been the two last survivors of this gallant race. A generation of English have grown up to whom Italy is nothing but a Fascist country; and even the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in its last edition, fosters this ignorance, for the articles on modern Italy are mostly the work of Mussolini's propagandists. Nobody mourns the palaces of Genoa, because nobody knows their colonnaded staircases opening august perspectives up the mountain-side; only a few ageing memories cherish San Lorenzo Fuori, with its frescoed atrium and cipollino columns, or the cathedral of Syracuse, which took two thousand years to build—a Doric temple with Gothic windows and baroque façade, which has sheltered successively the worship of Artemis, of Allah, and the Mother of God.

> Nessun maggior dolore,
> Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
> In miseria. . . .

Yet I have found solace as well as distress dipping into some of the books that once I read so happily in the places they describe. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Mrs. Thrale, Beckford, and Goethe; Byron, Shelley, Browning, and Clough; Stendhal, Taine, Bourget, and Suarès; George Sand, Hawthorne, Hans Andersen, and Marion Crawford; Symonds, Augustus Hare, Horatio Brown, Vernon Lee, Janet Ross, Samuel Butler, Edward Hutton, Norman Douglas, D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, and Osbert Sitwell—the list could be greatly prolonged of writers whose imagination and sympathy have responded with gusto to the Italian scene. (I wonder if anyone alive beside myself has had the fondness to read *Romola* twice, for the sake of the city it so painstakingly evokes?) Three of the writers who have written with most understanding of Italy are Americans—W. W. Story in his *Roba di Roma*, W. D. Howells in his *Venetian Life* and *Italian Journeys*, and Henry James in his *Italian Hours*. The two first wrote in the Sixties; James's papers range in date from 1872 to 1909. There are still Englishmen who can remember from their boyhood the pomps of the Temporal Power; only last week I was talking with one who had seen the red-trousered soldiers of Louis Napoleon and the red-stockinged cardinals they were sent to guard, cardinals who lumbered through the Papal City, funereal horses dragging their massive coaches gaudy with gilt and heraldic hammer-cloths. But since progress invaded Rome with the Piedmontese troops in September 1870, the splendours have suffered obstinate dilapidation. The great villa gardens that encircled the city have been successively built over. Even since the last war, more beauty has been destroyed in Rome than in any other town I know. Mussolini, careless (or rather jealous) of Papal grandeurs, tore down palace after palace to expose a few debased antique columns or to open some inappropriate vista. All who knew pre-Fascist Rome will remember sauntering through the vineyards on the Aventine, and then dining at the Castello dei Cesari, with an incomparable view towards the Palatine across market-gardens and the Jewish cemetery and the Circus Maximus. The last time I was there, mean houses covered the Aventine, and the valley below was hardly to be recognised, for through it ran an asphalt road with trams. Even the classic visage of the Campagna had been disfigured with a pox of Peacehavens. The Liberators, it must be admitted, have only been continuing a process beloved by the Italians themselves.

Rome till recently was too large for its inhabitants, and this made a chief part of its charm. The quarter beyond the Palatine was especially elegiac; to see the chapels of San Gregorio Magno and the fifth-century frescoes in SS. Giovanni e Paolo one wandered through rural lanes whose walls were illuminated with wild flowers. The countryside had for centuries crept into the city, inspiring the pictures of Claude and Corot, the history of Gibbon, the poetry of Shelley. Of *Prometheus Bound* its author tells us:

> This poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees which are extended in ever-widening labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in the divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of the drama.

It has been innocently suggested that those of us who emphasise the value of Italian monuments prefer the past to the future. But, *per Bacco*, the future is just what we do think of! The living are trustees with an obligation to posterity. And that the Fascists have neglected precautions for the great bequest does not make our duty less imperative. Rome, indeed all Italy, belongs not to a nation, but to every human being, living or unborn, who can respond to its beauty and associations. How few of us can flatter ourselves that in a hundred years anyone will care whether we died at thirty or at eighty. But buildings are less ephemeral than men, and unless there comes a tyranny of dunces and universal darkness buries all, men centuries hence will still be finding in the Italian scene creative happiness, inexhaustible inspiration. We are, moreover, peculiarly ill-justified when we destroy, because we are incapable of building greatly. Has this century raised a single edifice that we can suppose our grandchildren thinking worth a pilgrimage? Our long evolution from the first vertebrates, through the palaeolithic millennia, seems a tale told by an idiot, except in so far as we respond to the achievement of thinkers and poets, artists and saints.

Of all cities, Rome offers the most grandly varied rewards, from the Pantheon and the Claudian Aqueduct, to the piazza of Sant'Ignazio, disposed like a set for the Commedia dell'Arte. A church like San Clemente epitomises Christian history. Deep below it are walls dating from Republican Rome; then comes a Mithraic shrine, a basilica of the fourth century, ninth century ambones, a twelfth-century nave with mosaics, fifteenth-century frescoes, an eighteenth-century ceiling—and these disparate elements so chime together as to effect an impression of serene felicity. Yet if one had to choose one of the many historic Romes, I think the highest claim would be made by the Rome of the High Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation, the Rome of Michelangelo, Bernini, and Borromini, the Rome whose palaces and churches, magnificent with columns, arches, volutes, broken pediments, deities, marbles, and frescoes, swagger above a multitude of fountains to celebrate alternately the pride of man and the omnipotence of God.

Rome makes only one of many splendours. Florence is a city one may like or dislike; the climate is hostile, the streets crowded, the Centre ugly, the palaces often black and prison-like, but there is more great painting here than anywhere else, and the Tuscan surroundings are inexhaustibly alluring. Only by mentioning one building or picture or view in each Italian city one could fill this column; and how difficult would be the choice! At Verona, for instance, one would have to decide between the amphitheatre, San Zeno, the Scaliger tombs, the market-place, and the Giusti garden; at Frascati between a dozen villas; at Ravenna between a dozen churches. Has any other city so many sublime views as Perugia? In Vicenza every street is lined with palaces. (The scale in Italy is no less extraordinary than the refinement of detail—these cities seem to have been built for titans.) The Schifanoia at Ferrara, the ducal palaces at Mantua and Urbino, the ramparts at Lucca, the twofold shrine at Assisi, the Pieros at Arezzo, the group of Rossellino buildings at Pienza (all put up in three years), the piazza at Siena—does the modern world contain any spectacle comparable with the *Palio*?—Orvieto, Pisa, Parma, Brescia, Bergamo, Padua, Bologna, Pistoia, Viterbo, Volterra, San Gimignano, Naples, Amalfi, Lecce, Palermo—but why continue? Those who know Italy are aware of the fabulous richness; to others little notion of it can be given by any account. Even Henry James groans over the difficulty of rightly and gratefully expressing the intimacy of the feeling each place inspires—a difficulty, he tells us, that "makes the old, the familiar tax on the luxury of loving Italy."

This is a tax beyond my power to pay, yet I cannot leave unmentioned the place of all places I have loved the best. Venice is the least spoiled of the larger cities—Mussolini has done little damage there. (I wonder if the statue still stands for the Germans to gaze upon of that great patriot, the Jew Manin, who in 1848 restored the Venetian republic and maintained it against Austria for eighteen months?) In Venice, moreover, not only does water form an ubiquitous looking-glass, reflecting the buildings and flickering the sun back upon them, but the salt in the air and the damp quickly fade brick and paint to a peculiar delicacy of tone, and the nacreous light adds further subtleties to those blanched greens and blues and pinks. The eye is thus perpetually feasted, while the absence of all wheeled traffic makes Venice incomparably the most agreeable of cities in which to make long, leisurely walks. You set out for the Madonna del Orto or the Gesuiti, but when passing the Miracoli or the justly named Santa Maria Formosa, you have to look in, as it were, on a beloved friend. You cross a hundred bridges to visit a picture, which often, like the Negroponte in San Francesco della Vigna, is so ill-placed as to tease your repeated curiosity. On a lucky day you may penetrate to some corner that for years has eluded your efforts to rediscover it, for Venice is always secretive and labyrinthine. Then, with dusk, you take to a gondola and watch the lights coming out as you cross to the Zattere, where the Giudecca canal pulses with ships on their way to other Adriatic ports, an artery that shows Venice living as well as beautiful and gay. And so to dine near by on mullet or *scampi* under a vine-trellis in the modest restaurant, where you will be the only foreigners. Later the band in the Piazza plays overtures from forgotten operas, and the crowd at Florian's seem the guests at some prodigious rout, for Venice, which was the Monte Carlo of the eighteenth century, has reasserted itself as a fashionable watering-place. But October is the best month, when the hotels have emptied, when barges come from the mainland heavy with grapes, and the sun makes up for its too early setting by lavishing a riper virtu-

osity to bedeck, like a ceiling-painter, the whole Venetian sky with an extravagance of colour.

Italians have often complained that the foreigner treats their country as a mere museum, and this was true of most tourists. But the foreign residents and even those of us who were lucky enough to make an annual pilgrimage felt the warmest liking—and admiration—for the Italian people. Truthful and delightful the accounts in *Life on the Lagoons*, in *Alps and Sanctuaries*, in *Old Calabria*; and I would specially recommend W. W. Story's *Roba di Roma*. Written by an American sculptor during the last years of the Temporal Power, it evidently dwells on the picturesqueness of daily life which then packed Rome with foreign artists. Sometimes one may be reminded of Thackeray's joke about the Academy picture of "A Contadino dancing with a Trasteverina at the door of a Locanda to the music of a Pifferaro." But how enchantingly Story describes harvest and vintage, processions and ceremonies—the August flooding, for instance, of the Piazza Navona, when cars laden with naiads and tritons splashed through the artificial lake, till even the spectators drove or waded into the water to join the torch-lit fun. How sympathetic, moreover, and still how pertinent, is the whole picture that emerges from Story's book of the national character. The Italians are still as notable for their kindliness and humour as for their industry. They are childlike in both their tempers and their gaieties; they love fireworks and noise and dressing up. (The Goncourts record seeing just outside Florence during Carnival a plough being driven by a peasant dressed as a pierrot.) But Henry James is right, I think, in explaining this "easy surrender to *all* the senses as the sign of an unconscious philosophy of life—the philosophy of a people who have lived long and much, who have discovered no short cuts to happiness and no effective circumvention of effort. . . ." For the Italians, if often uneducated, strike one as highly civilised, possessing by inheritance the sceptical irony of an ancient culture. While Nazism seems to correspond at the least to a widespread and recurrent neurosis, Fascism, in my experience, was alien to the national character of the Italians, and was therefore usually regarded with cynicism alike by its victims and its profiteers.

The passions of war have doubtless accentuated the cruelty of some Italians no less than the philistinism of some Englishmen. But every writer I have mentioned testifies alike to the general good nature of the Italian people and to the incalculable, continuing value of the monuments created by their ancestors. The buildings and paintings of Italy remain as much a part of the present as the poetry of Shakespeare and Racine, or the music of such Huns as Mozart and Beethoven. If through our fault they are not a part also of the future, posterity will brush aside our explanations. Herostratus won immortality by burning the Ephesian temple, and the Caliph Omar by destroying the library of Alexandria.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

LYTTON STRACHEY

Lytton Strachey. By MAX BEERBOHM. *Cambridge University Press.* 1s. 6d.

In this year's Rede Lecture, recently delivered at Cambridge, Sir Max Beerbohm pays a moving personal tribute to Lytton Strachey as one fellow-artist to another. A lecture is bound to be brief. But in twenty-three all-too-short pages, Max Beerbohm sets down, with great sympathy and only the gentlest irony, his recollections of Lytton Strachey as a man and an appraisal of his gifts as a writer. Lytton Strachey's death in 1932 made no great stir, evoked no eulogies—as Max says, he was not old enough to have become a Grand Old Man. And, in the interval since his death, critics have fought strangely shy of committing themselves to any final estimate of his work. Therefore to Strachey's surviving friends, Max's charming memories and genuine appreciation will come as a belated funeral oration in honour of the man they loved and admired. The choice could not be bettered; for among all his elders and contemporaries there was no one whose praise Strachey valued more highly than that of Max.

To the opinion of his work expressed by professional critics Strachey was remarkably indifferent. Sensitive artists are often handicapped in their careers by very thin skins and react violently to the rough tongue of criticism. But when the press cuttings came in after the publication of one of his books, Strachey would brush aside the flattery, and pounce on the attacks on him as the only items worth considering—as a joke. The only comments he treated seriously were private letters from other artists whose judgments he respected. This insensitivity to the ruck of criticism was the natural concomitant of Strachey's intellectual attitude both to life and art—the supreme importance to him of maintaining a high standard—the highest possible standard—of values. This belief was fundamental in him, and in this—in the words he applied to Prince Albert in a very different connection—"he would never relax." Max says "he was perhaps not a very warm-hearted man." But that is far from true of the *man*, who was one of the kindest and most sympathetic of men. He was certainly not a very warm-hearted writer. The heart he regarded as the most untrustworthy organ with which to write biography. The dispassionate brain must work to sort and select the evidences of character; and the co-ordinating mind of the artist must finally portray the unique individual, without flattery or caricature but as a vivid likeness of human idiosyncrasy, and above all as an imperishable work of art.

"Strachey was by temperament an Eighteenth Century man," writes Max, and it is easy to agree with this classification up to a point. That age of reason and orderliness with its high standard of thought and artistic creation was indeed a Golden Age to him in retrospect. But he was not quite the escapist from the modern world that Max takes for granted. His ambition as a biographer was not just to restore and rehabilitate the level gaze and cool detachment of those old aristocrats, but to see deeper and farther than their proud, hard eyes ever saw, and to penetrate those recesses of human nature where the subtle worm of the unconscious plies its insidious trade.

As for the Victorian age, with which his name seems to be irretrievably coupled, it both fascinated and revolted him. The raw material for a hundred biographies lay there in profusion—but what an inchoate mass! He *could* select and refine, and finally mould the stuff into some presentable shape, but it would not be a labour of love—only an artist's *tour de force*. Surely once was enough! This was the reason that he never produced a second series of Eminent Victorians. The whole period was a deplorable one of confusion; and its standards of art and conduct, whenever it had any, were cock-eyed.

> A most peculiar age: an age of barbarism and prudery, of nobility and cheapness, of satisfaction and desperation; an age in which everything was discovered and nothing known; an age in which all the outlines were tremendous and all the details sordid; when gas-jets struggled feebly through the circumambient fog, when the hour of dinner might be at any moment between two and six, when the doses of rhubarb were periodic and gigantic, when pet dogs threw themselves out of upper storey windows, when cooks reeled drunk in areas, when one sat for hours with one's feet in dirty straw dragged along the streets by horses, when an antimacassar was on every chair, and the baths were minute tin circles, and the beds were full of bugs and disasters.

Perhaps I may be allowed to add to Sir Max Beerbohm's reminiscences a few of my own recollections of the last twelve years of Lytton Strachey's life, when I lived in the same house with him. Most of the day he spent reading. Even when there were visitors in the house, for well-recognised periods of the day he retired behind a book. Novels were almost the only books he found it hard to enjoy. For instance, he had the highest admiration for Proust as a writer, but I believe never managed to finish *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*; although he would take the nineteen volumes of Horace Walpole's letters in his stride. When he intended to write a book the preliminary reading might take years; and he never began writing until he felt he had exhausted the available material. His writing was done in three hours between breakfast and lunch—never later in the day. Shortly before lunch he would emerge from the library where he wrote and take a short stroll across the fields. That was the sign that writing had stopped for the day. He generally wrote a page of foolscap in the three hours—about 300 or 400 words. He did not write sentence by sentence, but paragraph by paragraph. Each paragraph was composed mentally before he wrote it down. His manuscripts show very few corrections; and he hardly ever altered any of his proofs. Only after a work was completed would he read it aloud in the evenings. Punctuation in print he regarded as of the utmost importance for style. A colon was not to be trifled with, and could be a more serious matter than a full stop. While for the judicious use of the semi-colon he had a respect almost amounting to veneration.

What is his position in English literature? Will he be read a hundred years hence as a great biographer—or as a great prosaist, as Max calls him—a prose stylist? No one, I think, would accuse him of the faults he attaches to Froude's style: "a looseness in the texture, an absence of concentration, a failure to fuse the *whole* material into organic life." And who reads Froude to-day? But "one thinks of the mysterious wisdom of Thucydides, of the terrific force of Tacitus, of the Gibbonian balance and lucidity and co-ordination—ah! to few, to very few, among historians is it granted to bring the κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί into the world." His friends, at any rate, while waiting for the Twenty-First Century to give judgment, will join with Sir Max Beerbohm in the thought "that in the meantime, in the great pale platitude of the meantime, there will be, as hitherto, a few discriminating readers of things written in past times; people likely to read, and likely to revel in, the works of Lytton Strachey."

RALPH PARTRIDGE

SOCIAL SECURITY

Pillars of Security. By SIR WILLIAM BEVERIDGE. *George Allen and Unwin.* 6s.

Social Security. Edited by WILLIAM A. ROBSON. *George Allen and Unwin.* 15s.

Sir William Beveridge's book is not as massive as the title might suggest. It contains a collection of newspaper articles published during the year ending about last March, together with one or two papers that have not reached the public before. These last include the famous summary of the Beveridge Report prepared by the author for the troops, and indiscreetly suppressed by the War Office. Indeed, in this slim volume there are actually two summaries of the Report, the second being a reprint of Sir William's radio talk immediately after the publication of his plan. The unity of the book as a whole derives, in the author's own words, from the two complementary themes: "that war and peace for a democracy are indivisible and that wartime requires methods of government different from those of peacetime."

Beveridge enthusiasts who have mastered the original Report well enough to advance beyond the summaries will notice one or two points of special interest in this book. The first is the author's emphatic contradiction of the statement that "Sir William Beveridge has himself said that his scheme is impracticable unless employment is maintained and mass-unemployment is avoided." The word "impracticable" he now explains, applies only to one "detail" of the scheme, namely, the proposal that men who have been out of work for six months should be required to attend a training centre as a qualifying condition for unemployment benefit. The scheme as a whole does not stand or fall by this. On the contrary, the correct *general* statement is not that the Beveridge Report is *impracticable* if there is mass

employment but that no scheme of social surance is *satisfactory* if there is mass unemployment": which is different.

A second point of interest is Sir William's own timate of the Parliamentary debate on the Report. e hands a handsome bouquet to the Government for all that they accepted forthwith, and assifies the remaining differences as matters principle, of procedure and of detail. Differences of principle include the Government's jection of the principle of adequacy of benefit th in amount and in time. "My Plan takes as aim the abolition of want. The Government regard to pensions wholly, and in regard to ildren's allowances and unemployment and sability benefit to a lesser extent, abandon that m." The bouquet begins to look less impressive.

The Fabian symposium on Social Security, ited by Dr. Robson, is a scholarly and timely ece of work. The first part consists of a series chapters by different authors, each competent a particular field, on the social services as they e. Part II is post-Beveridge, giving a considered scussion of the Report and its implications, by embers of a small committee associated with e Fabian Society. Did you know that the work- class public spends each year on provision ainst death as much as the whole public expendire on elementary and secondary education? id you know that at age 40 a blind person passes om the Blind Persons to the Old Age Pensions cts, and in consequence becomes subject to a w means test under which his previous pension likely to be *reduced*? Do you know whether is better for your widow for you to be killed, as soldier, in this war or the last, or, as a civilian, an air raid or a munitions explosion? Such uestions are just incidental to the general muddle. nd what a muddle it is! No wonder that the tizen who is the consumer of the social services confused, and irritated, and quite sure that the ly rule is: heads they win and tails I lose. Our bian authors are indeed to be congratulated on clarity of exposition which fairly matches the scurity of the matters to be described.

Part II, read alongside of Dr. Robson's introuction which puts the story of the social services to its historical background, will set anybody inking who is not a case-hardened pro- or anti-everidge fan. One is struck first by the wide range common agreement amongst those who have ought seriously about the whole subject. The fferences of principle this time—for instance tween the Fabians and Sir William—are really not important. The two major issues raised relate to the treatment of rent and to "the insurance principle." R. W. B. Clarke, elaborating the Fabian evidence to the Beveridge Committee on this subject, cannot accept Sir William's argument that because there are unreasonable differences between one man's rent and another's, correspondingly unreasonable differences should be introduced into social security benefits. On the insurance principle Mr. Clarke shows in masterly style that the answer to the question when is insurance not insurance, is: when it is social insurance. The actuarial basis of a contributory scheme is imaginary; and the collection of contributions from insured persons is to be defended, if at all, as a registration payment giving a *right* to benefit. The elaborate assumptions underlying the Government actuary's elaborate calculations about the proper level of contributions are quite arbitrary. Quite as good a case could be made for any other figure that might be preferred by equally impressive calculations, based on other, but equally plausible, assumptions.

Mrs. Clarke's chapter on the Staff Problem reminds us how lamentably public relations have been neglected in the social services. The notion that even the poorer citizens of our democracy have a right to demand rhyme and reason from the bureaucracy is still pitiably strange. Mrs. Clarke has some sensible ideas about staffing and office equipment, based on elementary truths, such as that forms are different from people, and that excellence in dealing with the one is no proof of equal ability to handle the other; that bright paint in an office is as cheap as dark paint; and that all the qualities necessary to make a good social worker "are not inherent in the chromosomes."

A final chapter by Dr. Stark Murray sketches a plan for a national medical service. This differs from the rest of the book (and from Fabian projects generally) in that it is more of an ideal blueprint than a map of where we go from here.

BARBARA WOOTTON

ONE NEW POET

Stone and Flower. By KATHLEEN RAINE. *Poetry, London: Nicholson and Watson.* 6s.

The Ventriloquist's Doll. By KENNETH ALLOTT. *Cresset.* 5s.

South of Forty. By JOHN PUDNEY. *Lane.* 2s. 6d.

Poetry, London. *Nicholson and Watson.* 2s.

My colleague, Mr. Whitebait, who spends more hours in cinemas than is good for him, was complaining the other day about the "European background" that disfigures so many trivial and otherwise harmless films. Two famous lovers pursue one another across the screen; very well, but why the guerrillas in the background, why Warsaw burning and London unbending to take it? Can't they kiss without the tanks going forward or turn out the light without whispering, "Democracy"? What's Hitler to them or they to Hitler? But the same cavalcade, the same bits of newsreel, have to be unloaded again. Hollywood's tribute to the times! This embarrassment, Mr. Whitebait seemed to suggest, fell heavily on the film reviewer, who would prefer his slush untainted.

But a similar difficulty confronts the reader of current verse. You know the sort of newsreel that is always flickering in and out:

> . . . wheels turning, cities fallen,
> Munich, Warsaw, Rotterdam, Paris, and Clapham Common,
> And the night that put miles, my dear,
> Between us and the battle of the River Plate.

For a long time now poets have been expected to drag in actualities of the war as a matter of principle, or, failing that, to revive the camera-eye of peacetime:

> I see the banana skins,
> The drinks, the headlines, the toffs out of season,
> The shifty look in the padre's eye,
> The unemployed chained to a street corner,
> Death in the attic and the winner of the 2.30

Without such catalogues one would have felt, ten years ago, that Life and Time weren't somehow being grasped by the forelock; but what then might have been an exciting innovation has become now the stock background. A bit of feeling, a bit of newsreel, a bit of propaganda or sex, and there you are. It's the most blatant *collage*, a verse equivalent of the "Me and Europe" theme beloved of special correspondents; while the journalist at least has the advantage of his story, of having been on the spot. Background verse, tending to be satirical, unformed and Left in politics, provides the easiest school for a poet to grow up in, and the four poets at the top of this column have been chosen from twenty or more, the majority of them still with their noses buried in Auden and MacNeice. For them a primrose isn't a yellow primrose, but an early shell-burst in the spring offensive.

Among those working outside the curriculum, Miss Kathleen Raine very easily comes first. She is truant and this is her first collection

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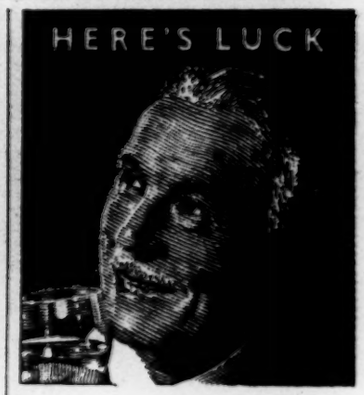

What does the connoisseur ask for in his whisky? He asks for a delicate bouquet, a velvet softness and a genial afterglow—in fact he asks for:—

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of verse, which she has been saving up for some time. When her poems fail, they are wan and cryptic in their own way; when they succeed—which they do again and again, memorably—a new accent is introduced into contemporary writing. "The Red Light," one of the best of them, has no obvious attachments either with the present or the past:

> The women burn throughout the dead of night,
> their red signs through the curtained windows peep.
> What sacrilegious hand puts out the light,
> and for what fallen body do they weep?
>
> Christ, as I die, I own it is for Thee,
> love, human nature, origin and shame.
> The same light in the shrine and brothel see,
> wherever human passion lights its flame
>
> For of that red star are we virgins all,
> and the red heart is stilled by the red fire
> that moves the spirit more than its desire
> towards unmoving love, the point of will.

Sacred and profane love is the theme, implicit if not stated, of many poems in *Flower and Stone*. Ghosts, cockcrow, passion and coldness, the trampled angel in the street, landscapes curiously frozen, an atmosphere in which you can hear the individual drop of rain. A muted, shut-in world, sometimes lovely, sometimes hard and unprisable, that puts a glass between us and the universe, and holds a universe in its lens. Miss Raine is a poet of a few simple words, and occasionally those words are flat and unevocative. In the stanzas quoted, for example, the finish is tame; "unmoving" is thoughtfully chosen but wrong for all that, and the whole of the last line shows a tendency towards the dead patterns hinted at by the "stone" of the title. The feeling can go as cold as the drawings by Barbara Hepworth; life becomes still-life. It is odd, by the way, to find in one of these poems Marlowe's most staggering line, "See see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament," used as the starting-point for an almost geometrical elaboration in words. The line itself, also, is emasculated, Miss Raine for some reason having allowed the "where" to drop out. However, such deficiencies do not detract seriously from the value of this exquisite minor poetry written in a minor key.

With Mr. Allott we are back among echoes of the school-room and the street-corner.

> Yet we who walk among the distorting mirrors,
> Whose hearts refuse even the empirical years. . . .

Surely, one has heard that before? And other lines revive memories of an earlier form-master:

> Professor Nemo, sad ventriloquist.

All the expected influences are there—with 1918 as a date-line beyond which the poet daren't look backward—and Mr. Allott has a perky insistence and an eye that brings oddities together. He makes a bright use of squalor, much as Mr. Graham Greene does in prose, but here, unfortunately, there is only the stream of images and no story.

Mr. Pudney writes war poetry—I was going to say, to order. That's not quite true. What "Flying Officer X" provides in stories, he provides in verse. The satisfaction of being in things and not yearning away outside them has certainly meant a gain in skill and assurance. He can be jaunty, matey, efficient, and serious in a straightforward way. How far the simplicities of *South of Forty* come natural to Mr. Pudney or are assumed I don't know. The book is exceedingly accomplished and contains at least one admirable poem, "First Sighting of Africa."

The new number of *Poetry, London*—joint publisher of Miss Raine's *Flower and Stone*—seems more than ever opulent. Graham Sutherland's lyre bird on the cover and four illustrations to Quarles's "Hieroglyphics" rather put the other pages in the shade; but there is a high general level and variety in the contributions of twenty-four poets ranging from Anonymous to Charles Williams, with Alex Comfort, Dylan Thomas and Henry Treece on the way. My own choice among these would be the second of the MacNeice poems and F. T. Prince's "Soldiers Bathing."

G. W. STONIER

ASIA AFTER THE WAR

The Future of South-East Asia. By K. M. PANIKKAR. *Allen and Unwin.* 5s.

This little book deserves very careful consideration by all who are concerned either practically or theoretically with post-war reconstruction. It deals with South-East Asia or Further India, as it is sometimes called, i.e., with that vast area whose political configuration war and the Japanese completely destroyed in the course of a few months, namely Malaya, Indonesia, Indo-China, Thailand, and Burma. Mr. Panikkar considers what the political reconstruction should be in these territories, when the Allies have driven the Japanese out of them. There are several reasons which make his book a notable contribution. He is an Indian and it is most important that Europeans should have from a competent Indian an estimate of the social forces which will operate in these Asiatic countries after the war and proposals for its national and international reorganisation. Mr. Panikkar is eminently competent. He has not previously written very much, but what he did write, particularly a little book on caste, showed that he is extremely intelligent. He was educated in India and Oxford and took high academic honours in history. He knows the historical facts and background, a just appreciation of which is essential for anyone who puts forward proposals for the solution of such gigantic problems. But he has the additional advantage of being able to approach the problems with the eye of a practical politician. As secretary to the Chamber of Princes he has been able for years to take part in Asiatic, and often international, politics from the inside. This gives to his book a concreteness and realism which such studies often lack; here there is no utopianism, for Mr. Panikkar keeps feet and eyes pretty steadily upon the solid earth.

The reader would do well to study Mr. Panikkar's proposals side by side with the conclusions of the recent Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations which have been published under the title, *War and Peace in the Pacific*. There is a great deal of ground which is common to both, and it is remarkable how often both are forced by the logic of facts to make the same proposals. The statesmen confronted with the problem of reorganising South-East Asia when peace comes will immediately find that it has two aspects. First, there is the problem of organising its security, and the war has shown that it cannot be solved nationally; peace will never be secure in that part of Asia unless it is guaranteed internationally by a strong International Authority prepared vigorously to operate a system of collective security. It is significant that, however anxious people are to steer clear of anything connected with the League idea, as soon as they have to tackle the practical problem of providing for future security, they can find no alternative to what was in fact the basic principle of the League system. Mr. Panikkar argues—I think, rightly—that the pivot of an effective collective security system in this area must be a free and powerful India. For many years to come the defence of South-East Asia against potential aggression must be based on India. Mr. Panikkar's proposals for establishing a free and powerful India are extremely interesting. He thinks that the only solution is the acceptance by the Hindu community of the Pakistan idea. He would unite on a basis of equality and freedom Pakistan, Hindustan, and Burma as a single defence area, and he would

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"S.S. " Sept., 1942.
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THE annual general meeting of Beechams Pills Limited was held July 22nd in London.

Mr. Philip E. Hill, presiding, said (in part): For the eleventh successive year your Directors are able to report increased profits, this year's trading profits being £94,119 up at £1,269,334.

From a perusal of the Accounts it will be seen that we made a profit of £51,512 on the sale of investments of which your Directors considered it prudent to dispose in view of the favourable prices obtainable. The profit on these transactions has been added to the carry forward. The year has not been an easy one, as the raw material position has been more difficult than last year, and quotas and other restrictions have militated against sales expansion. However, I am glad to say that in spite of these facts, sales of the group's products were substantially in excess of those for the previous year.

Our new subsidiary companies, which were acquired in continuation of the Board's policy of extending the business of the group beyond proprietary medicines, have all done well and have contributed satisfactory dividends. Our export trade has suffered severely from increased Dominion and Foreign Taxation and from the stringent shipping restrictions. I am glad to say, however, that we have held our own in the major markets, and are ready to follow our policy of expansion as soon as times are favourable. New lines have been put on the markets, and their successful exploitation is only a matter of time.

Your Directors felt justified this year in slightly increasing the dividend on the Deferred shares, which I hope meets with your approval.

I am glad to be able to tell you that so far sales show an increase over last year.

The report was adopted.

...en bring this "triune commonwealth" into ...ose partnership with Britain. I have personally ...ways been opposed to the Pakistan idea, but I ...ust admit that the case made by Mr. Panikkar ...d others has lately impressed me strongly, ...d it may be that the communal question can ...ly be solved along such lines.

The other aspect of the problem arises from the ...ct that all the other territories in the area were ...bjected, in varying degrees, to the colonial ...stem. It is doubtful whether anyone will ...empt to resuscitate that system in its original ...rm, or that, if they made the attempt, it could ...e successful. The problem is to provide for ...e passage of each territory from subordination ...d subjection to self-government, and at the ...me time to plan their economic development ...d bring them into the system of collective ...fence. Mr. Panikkar deals with the case of ...ch territory separately; it is to be hoped that ...any people will study his proposals. It is ...gnificant that his scheme for international ...pervision closely agrees with the conclusions of ...e Pacific Conference. LEONARD WOOLF

Week-end Competitions

No. 704

...et by Diogenes

Prizes amounting to four guineas are offered for ...pigrams in verse upon the fall of Mussolini.

...ULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number ...f the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and ...ould be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great ...urnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor ...y first post on Monday, August 9th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves ...e right to print in part or as a whole any matter ...nt in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. ...annot be returned. When no entries reach the ...equired standard no prize will be awarded.

...ESULTS OF COMPETITION No. 701

...et by Roger Marvell

Many competitors will remember from their childhood the rhymed advice to young shooters, beginning: "Never, never let your gun Pointed be at anyone. . . ." The usual prizes are offered for twelve lines (in the same metre) of advice to children learning bridge, film-acting or the piano.

Report by Roger Marvell

A large entry, the piano the most popular subject, and bridge a good second. A. M. Robertson sent part of a ballade (with the rest of it overleaf), the refrain being "You never bid a three-card suit," an ingenious work but not what was wanted. Among couplets that caught my fancy were

Never, never let your fun
Pointed be at anyone. (SAM GORDON)

Sob frequently; the facile tear
Saves pints of glycerine a year.
(STANLEY J. SHARPLESS)

Coat lapels must not be gripped
(Unless called for in the script).
(JOSEPH BAGULEY)

Fondle notes or firmly strike:
Pedal only on your bike.
(WILLY TADPOLE)

Keep your eyes from off your hands
For so the parachutist lands.
(SIR ROBERT WITT)

Do not, as one bad boy did,
Carve your name upon the lid.
(F. J. HARVEY)

Stack the cards; when there's a chance
Give your neighbour's hand a glance.
(J. P. N.)

Should you often cheques post-date,
Social death will be your fate.
(GEOFFREY H. EMMETT)

But such flights of fancy were rare. Most competitors were content to give the most obvious advice, and I became a little glum when I read for the twentieth time, "Never trump your partner's ace." Beside the competitors already named, the following sent specially good entries: Leslie Johnson, Stock-Cross, Leslie Pain, A. W. Clarke, L.E.J., Richard West, Mrs. M. A. Bryan, Ming, Alan Russell, W. H. G. Price, B.P., E.R.M., Allan M. Laing, L.H.D., H. Fairthorne, Rebe P. Taylor and Jean Moncrieff. I recommend a first prize of three guineas to be divided between F.C.C. and Millington; a consolation prize of one guinea between C. W. Allen and Little Billee.

Always practise if you can
Distant from the haunts of man,
Jam or honey on the keys
Recollect can never please.

When you must break down, do not
Do so at the self-same spot.
Spare your listeners that pain,
O-my-God-B-Flat-*again*.

Lastly, keep in strict control
Secret yearnings of the soul:
These can never be avowed
By a pedal soft or loud. F. C. C.

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May play on the Pianoforte—
The which, observe, is Not a Toy
For any Vulgar girl, or boy.
Precious pennies Papa spent
Upon the Noble Instrument;
They will Sorely him Displease
Whose Grubby Fingers soil the keys!
Incessant practice on the same
(Though needful for Piano Fame),
Discriminating child, eschew
Between the hours of four, and two.
MILLINGTON

When the magnate passes by
Study how to catch his eye,
Climb upon his ample knees,
Say "Tiss ickle girlie please."

Children who are heard and seen
Magnified upon a screen
Very quickly earn a lot:
Teach your parents what is what.

Keep to bathos undefiled,
Be a lisping angel child,
Bleach your hair and keep it curly.
You may be another Shirley.
C. W. ALLEN

ADVICE TO CHILDREN LEARNING THE PIANO

First, my little boy or girl
Give your music-stool a twirl;
Test the pedals with your feet,
And twice or thrice adjust your seat;
Then take your handkerchief out, please,
Wipe your hands and dust the keys;
Next bow your head, as if in prayer,
Holding the right hand poised in air;
Then strike a soft and simple chord,
Arpeggioing it all up the board—
These the chief things to practise are,
If you would be a Concert Star.
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